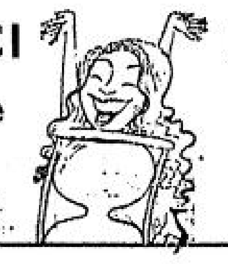
■ World / A8

US-led troops battle Shiites; dozens killed

■ Entertainment / A24

'Sing-galing' makes format changes

■ Lifestyle / C1



How to make your waist look smaller

■ Across / A13

Anti-communist leader gunned down

Tanong ng Bayan / A14

Mahalaga pa ba ang Bataan Day?

MAMAYANG ALAS-10 NG GABI

Trial of Sef Gonzales for murder starts

SYDNEY—A Filipino-Australian law student stabbed his wealthy father, mother and sister to death three years ago because he feared they would disown him over his choice of a girlfriend and because of his bad grades, a prosecutor said yesterday.

"Feeling his life unraveling, Sef set in train a plan to murder his parents and his

TRIAL/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Mark Anthony back in drug rehab center

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT WAS impossible to miss the guy doing push-ups.

One Sunday afternoon at Bicutan, a small group of patients at the Center for the Ultimate Rehabilitation of Drug Dependents (Curedd)—a sprawling facility in the heart of

MARK/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
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'Power crisis imaginary'

Energy chief says Lopez warning meant to create pessimism

**By Gil Cabacungan Jr.
and Abigail L. Ho**

THE WARNING of a looming power crisis aired by a private power generation firm was more imagined than real and could be meant to create pessimism amid the heated election campaign, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said yesterday.

Militant groups said the warning from Federico Lopez, president of First Generation Holdings Corp., was "self-serving" and was aimed at getting the government to again allow Lopez-controlled firms to enter into "sweetheart deals" with each other at the expense of consumers.

Lopez had told a group of businessmen on March 25 that the only way to avoid the return of crippling blackouts was to allow power utilities like the Lopez-owned Manila Electric Co. to buy electricity from private suppliers of their choice instead of being compelled to buy it from the state-owned National Power Corp.

The scion of the influential Lopez family noted that the power crisis was already evident in the Visayas and Mindanao, which are now experiencing power outages. He said blackouts could hit Luzon by 2007.

Perez said the "orchestrated effort to paint a negative scenario in the power sector" could be part of the unfolding political drama expected during an election campaign.

"The bid to generate pessimism will not help the country. There is no looming power crisis for the country, contrary to speculations," Perez said.

He said more than enough reserve capacity was in place and that new capacity was in the pipeline to meet the country's current and future energy demands.

The Department of Energy had reported that the country has a total "dependable" capacity of 13,262 megawatts, nearly half or 4,000 MW more than the aggregate peak demand of 8,509 MW.

"This means there is no reason to worry over an imaginary power crisis," Perez said.

Lopez yesterday said he aired the warning to make the government and the public aware that a power crisis could well be on its way if nothing was done to address it.

He said First Gen, as a generation firm, would be one of the first companies to benefit

POWER/ A4

FORMER Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and former President Fidel V. Ramos patch up their differences before the start of the Mass to celebrate Ms Macapagal's 57th birthday in Pampanga.

VAL HANDUMON

HUGS and kisses for the President from First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Ramos, Santiago bury 12 years of bitter feud

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk
**Gil Cabacungan Jr.
and Philip C. Tubeza**

LUBAO, Pampanga—Twelve years ago, she accused him of stealing the presidency from her and challenged him to a fistfight. He declined to brawl.

Yesterday, combative administration senatorial candidate Miriam Defensor-Santiago and former President Fidel V. Ramos shook hands, knelt together in front of the altar at the San Agustin Church here, and buried their bitter political feud.

The occasion was a Mass to mark the 57th birthday of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is facing a tough battle in the May 10 elections.

The feud erupted in 1992 when then presidential candidate Santiago accused rival Ramos of cheating her of victory in a seven-way race won by the former general by 874,000 votes. She even sued him before the electoral tribunal.

But in politics Philippine-style, your bitter enemy yesterday can be your ally today.

And so it happened.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. played the role of broker. Thirty minutes before the 8:40 a.m. Mass began and before Ms Macapagal arrived, De Venecia was seen inviting Ramos to move over to the front pews, where Santiago was seated.

She herself had been in the 10th

RAMOS/ A4

SHOWER OF LIGHTS
Fireworks illuminate the Monday night sky during the World Pyro Olympics Exhibition along the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard.

Bestseller sows seeds of 'purpose-driven' RP

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE SUFFERING housewife, the complacent manager, the Sunday Christian—having touched myriad lives such as theirs, this book may well be planting the seeds of a purpose-driven Philippines.

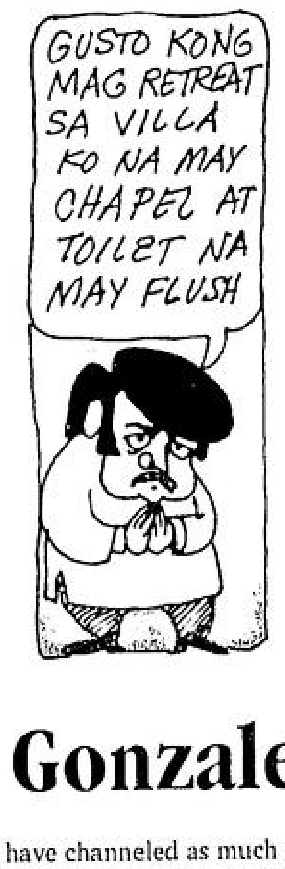
Housewife Veronica Palas, 29, lives in an urban poor community in Caloocan City. Up until recently, she did not believe in God. She was too busy worrying about her family's next meal, caring for her sick children, nagging her jobless husband, and being too angry about the cards that life had dealt her to bother about finding meaning. The heavens seemed only too happy to shower her with misfortune.

But then she stumbled upon the best-selling book, "Purpose Driven Life (PDL)," by American Baptist pastor Rick Warren. Now she says God has a purpose tucked behind every problem.

"He listens when we ask Him, and He replies," she told the INQUIRER on Friday. "You will realize that He fills every need."

Palas was among the first readers of the PDI's Tagalog edition,

BESTSELLER/ A4


GUSTO KONG MAG RETREAT SA VILLA KO NA MAY CHAPEL AT TOILET NA MAY FLUSH

Erap seeks 6-day retreat at villa

By Armand N. Nocum

NOT EXACTLY known for his piety, detained former President Joseph Estrada yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to allow him to go on a six-day spiritual "retreat" at his 15-hectare vacation estate so that he could meditate this Holy Week.

The estate in Tanay, Rizal, boasts of a Mediterranean-style villa and a swimming pool.

"The court's kind approval of this request will enable me to reflect and meditate in an environment conducive to the performance of spiritual exercises which I firmly believe will give me

ERAP SEEKS/ A4

Party-list groups dare Gonzales: Prove raps

**By Volt Contreras
Martin P. Marfil
and Juliet Labog-Javellana**

SHOW proof or shut up.

Bayan Muna issued the challenge yesterday to National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, who has called for the disqualification of six party-list groups from the May 10 elections for allegedly being front organizations of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

The Commission on Elections and Malacañang also urged Gonzales to present his evidence against Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Anak ng Bayan, Gabriela, Migrante and the Suara Bangsamoro.

"Those are general statements. They have to prove all of these," Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said in a phone interview.

At a briefing for the National Security Council on April 2, Gonzales said Bayan Muna, which won three seats in the House of Representatives in 2001, could have channeled as much as P500 million of its pork barrel to the New People's Army, the armed wing of the CPP.

"That is his opinion and it is his obligation to prove it," President Macapagal-Arroyo said on the Iglesia ni Cristo-run TV station Net 25. "Either it's his opinion or if there is any action to be taken, it's his obligation to prove (his charges)," the President said.

Ignacio Bunye, spokesperson for the President, said no action was taken on Gonzales' recommendation.

Presidential candidates Raul Roco and Panfilo Lacson said disqualifying the party-list groups was undemocratic because the anti-subversion law had been repealed.

Bayan Muna nominee Teddy Casiño said Gonzales probably based his "logic" on the fact that the projects of the party-list group were located mainly in depressed communities in the provinces.

PARTY-LIST/ A14

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with rains. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/06/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

Ermita accuses MILF faction of coddling JI, Abu militants

DEFENSE Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday accused a radical faction of the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) of harboring about 30 Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) militants as well as the leader of the Abu Sayyaf extremist group.

Ermita said senior commanders and political leaders of the MILF, which has resumed negotiations on ending a nearly 30-year-old Muslim insurgency, may not be aware of the situation.

"We are made to believe that their stay in the area is somehow being tolerated by the local MILF commanders (and) not necessarily known by the higher-ups involved in the peace negotiations," Ermita told reporters.

The foreign JI militants and Khadaffy Janjalani, leader of the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf, are believed to be hiding in MILF camps in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur provinces, where separatists have trained in bomb-making and military tactics, he said.

Access to MILF facilities

Ermita said the Abu Sayyaf and JI operatives were given access to MILF facilities in the Lanao area, which falls under the leadership of Islamic cleric Ustadz Abdulaziz Mimbantas, MILF vice chair for military affairs.

The MILF has repeatedly denied harboring militants.

"There is no truth to that. He (Ermita) cannot name names, he cannot say who are the commanders coddling the JI," rebel spokesman Eid Kabalu said.

Kabalu said all field commanders were under the control of the MILF leadership, and denied that any of them had taken matters into their own hands.

But a radical faction within the group is strongly against any negotiated political settlement to end the Muslim rebellion in Mindanao, Ermita said.

Peace negotiations

Ermita refused to disclose the numbers or the leaders of the radical faction. He hinted at a split within the rebel movement over peace negotiations, which are set to resume later this month.

"We have information that within the hierarchy of the MILF not everyone is in agreement with the conduct of the peace process," Ermita said. "There is a group that thinks ... that they can still achieve their objective of putting up a pan-Islamic, or an independent Islamic state, through armed struggle."

MILF leaders denied Ermita's allegation, saying it could be part of a government "divide-and-rule" tactic ahead of the talks in Kuala Lumpur.

"There are no factions within the MILF and we don't have any formal links with either the Abu Sayyaf or the Jemaah Islamiyah," said Kabalu.

Kabalu said there were no groups within the MILF that opposed the peace talks.

But Mohaqher Iqbal, MILF central committee member and head of the rebel peace panel, acknowledged there were "different lines of thinking" within the rebel movement.

"In an organization, you expect sub-groupings," he said. "You have radicals, moderates and so on. They have contradicting ideas but what is important is that the decision of the organization will be adopted by everyone."

He said the prevailing view within the MILF is to continue peace talks with the government.

"There are some saying that we should stop, but they are only a minority," he said. "The MILF remains a solid organization." *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra, Christine O. Avendaño, AP, Reuters*

Victims tag Abu abductors

SIX FORMER hostages of the Abu Sayyaf last night positively identified four suspected members of the bandit group who were arrested in Metro Manila last week.

Buddy Recio, his wife Divine, Joel Guillo, Angie Montealegre, Maria Fe Rosadenio and Roland Ullah appeared at a hastily called press conference at Camp Aguinaldo to identify Alhasar Manatad Limbong, alias Kosovo; Aburasid Banjeng Lim, alias Abu Hanipa; Redendo Cain Dellosa and Radzmar Sangkula Hassan.

The Recios, Montealegre and Rosadenio were abducted by the Abu Sayyaf from the Dos Palmas Resort in May of 2001. Guillo was kidnapped from the Jose Torres Memorial Hospital in Lamitan, Basilan in June 2001, and Ullah, who spent the longest time in captivity, was snatched from a Sipadan, Malaysia resort in April 2000.

The four suspects were arrested in separate raids by military and police in Cubao and Fairview, Quezon City, last week.

Mark Jalandoni of the Department of Justice said the DOJ decided to call the press conference to allay suspicions that the suspects were merely fall guys, as alleged by quarters from the Muslim community. "We did this to once and for all put to rest allegations that the suspects were not Abu Sayyaf," he said. *Alcuin Papa*

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Machinery seen to spell difference despite surveys

By Carlito Pablo

WITH PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr. locked in a statistical tie in the latest survey ratings, would political machinery make the difference?

The March 21 to 29 survey by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) showed Poe was picked by 32 percent of the respondents while the President by 31.4 percent. Ms Macapagal had trailed Poe in opinion polls late last year.

The formidable political machinery of Ms Macapagal is said to out-man that of Poe's by an average ratio of 10 to 1 for candidates vying for local posts, from congressman and governor to municipal mayor.

Local posts

A lopsided contest of political machinery has shaped up with the President's Koalisyon sa Katapatan at Karanasan sa Kinabukasan (K-4) fielding candidates covering more than 100 percent of local posts up for grabs in the May elections.

Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP), on the other hand, has candidates for only 12 percent of local posts.

"The opposition has no candidates in wide areas in the country," said Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., president of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

For the 211 legislative seats in the House of Representatives, K-4 has 214 candidates or 101 per cent compared to KNP's 26 bets, or 12 percent.

The K-4 fielded 84 candidates or 106 percent for 79 governorships, while KNP has 8 bets or only 10 percent. For the post of 119 city mayors, K-4 has 125 bets or 105 percent, and the KNP, 25 candidates or 21 per cent.

For the municipal mayors post, the K-4 fielded 1,620 candidates or 108 percent. Poe's KNP has only 87 candidates or 6 percent.

The Nationalist People's Coalition of businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. has fielded candidates covering at least 20 percent to 40 percent at the most of the local posts. The administration camp has claimed that 70 percent of NPC leaders supporting the President.

Poe spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero had said, however, that while local political leaders may be able to ensure their election with their loyal voters, the same voters would vote for their personal choices for national candidates, in this case, the popular Poe.

No local leader would allow oneself to be alienated from his or her constituents by insisting on a particular national candidate like Ms Macapagal, Escudero said.

Switching loyalties

Poe's running mate Sen. Loren Legarda also said the KNP would enter into coalitions with local leaders who would switch loyalties from the President to the popular actor.

KNP media bureau chief Rodolfo Reyes earlier claimed that political machinery account for only 5 per cent of the votes in the May elections, because Poe is a popular candidate.

A day before the latest SWS survey results came out, Poe told reporters in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental that he would step up his campaign.

In the SWS survey, Raul Roco came in third with 15 percent, Lacson was fourth with 11.2 percent, and Eduardo Villanueva last with 2.8 percent. *With Christine Avendaño, AFP, Reuters*

Why Poe can't seem to leave GMA behind

By Carlito Pablo
and Christine O. Avendaño

WHY IS Fernando Poe Jr., once dubbed a "tsunami of a presidential candidate," not pulling away from President Macapagal-Arroyo in the surveys?

"The Macapagal administration has succeeded in scaring the people," Poe spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) said in an interview.

In the most recent survey of the Social Weather Station, Poe had a razor-thin lead of 0.6 percent or a 32 percent rating against Ms Macapagal's 31.4 percent.

Escudero said the incumbent's camp had managed to intimidate political leaders as well as financial contributors whom ordinary people "respect and look up to for guidance."

"If local political leaders tell us they are for the opposition but cannot come out in the open because (they're afraid of) the administration, (then) ordinary people would have the same disposition," Escudero said.

"We believe the situation will be different on election day when the voter has no one else with him except the ballot," he added.

Escudero boldly predicted that Ms Macapagal's survey ratings wouldn't go any higher. "Her ratings have bottomed out already." On the other hand, he said, Poe's ratings could only go up, as he continued to reach out to more people.

Meanwhile, some of the opposition senatorial candidates want to hold a meeting with Poe and leaders of the coalition sometime during the Holy Week break.

They said they want to sit down and talk about the problems of the campaign, particularly the controversies involving local rival factions vying to be candidates of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) in the May polls. This was affecting the national candidates' own campaign, KNP reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., said yesterday in Dumaguete City.

Fellow KNP senatorial candidate Alfredo Lim had voiced the idea that the KNP should meet as a group and Pimental supported it.

"We're a little over midway in the campaign, it is time to take stock," Pimentel said. "We (have to) look at what we have accomplished and talk about the problems we are encountering."

Pimentel said one of the things "that sort of disturbed us" was the tendency of the KNP to cancel rallies where there were controversies involving supporters.

This happened in the just-concluded KNP sortie in Western Visayas where rallies in certain towns in Aklan were scrapped because of problems involving two factions of supporters there.

Some weeks ago, the KNP also cancelled a rally in Marawi City due to tensions between two rival supporters of Poe.

Petron, Caltex hike LPG prices

By Abigail L. Ho

TWO more oil companies, Petron Corp. and Caltex Philippines, yesterday raised the prices of their liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by P11 per 11-kg cylinder following an earlier increase by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.

Starting today, Petron and Caltex LPG would be sold at prices ranging from P311 to P321 per 11-kilogram cylinder.

Petron cited the rise in international contract prices (ICP), the benchmark used for local retail prices, as the reason for the price adjustment.

Early last month, Petron, Shell, Caltex and Total (Philippines) Corp. slashed prices of cooking gas by P1.50 per kg or P16.50 per cylinder.

The oil companies attributed the price reduction then to the softening of world prices from the February to March.

From March to April, however, the ICP rose by $27.50 per metric ton of LPG, prompting the top two oil players to jack up prices of cooking gas.

Total has yet to issue an advisory on whether it would also adjust its LPG price.

FIRST GENTLEMAN Jose Miguel Arroyo (center) is embraced by a leader of the Maluwalhating Pilipinas ecumenical movement after the group, which supposedly represents one million vote, defected from the camp of Sen. Panfilo Lacson to the administration side. Other leaders of the group are shown with Arroyo. JESS YUSON

DQ case filed vs Roxas

By Martin P. Marfil

ANOTHER disqualification case was filed yesterday at the Commission on Elections. This time it was against administration senatorial candidate Manuel "Mar" Roxas.

The case was filed by Pro-Con(stitution), the same group which filed a disqualification case against President Macapagal-Arroyo on March 15, and accused several other government officials of helping Ms Macapagal in her campaign.

In the 11-page petition filed by lawyer Vicente Bonaobra II, Roxas was accused of exceeding the 120-minute limit imposed by the Comelec on television advertisements for candidates.

Based on 483 spots on various television stations, Roxas logged 161 minutes and 15 seconds during the period of Feb. 10 to March 28.

Roxas, in a faxed statement to the INQUIRER, said he had not seen the complaint because he was in the province campaigning but had referred the matter to his lawyers. He added that "his campaign is professional, decent and a transparent one. We have diligently followed all electoral laws and rules and will continue to do so."

His legal counsel Pancho Joaquin also faxed a statement saying that the case "which has no factual or legal basis" was meant to harass Roxas, "who is doing very well in the campaign."

Bonaobra in his petition said: "Roxas exceeded the limit of 120 minutes on March 15 at 22:37 p.m. (10:37 p.m.) with the showing of his 15-seconder 'Masipag, Matalino' advertisement on the Big News over ABC 5."

"It is clear that with Roxas logging 161.25 minutes of television time to promote his candidacy, 41.25 minutes in excess of the limits allowed by the Omnibus Election Code as amended by the Fair Elections Act, he has violated not only Section 86 thereof but also Section (13) of Comelec Resolution no. 6520," he said.

Roxas has several variations of political advertisements shown on television. These are: the 30-seconder "Sigla ng Palengke," the 15-seconder "Masipag, Matalino," the 15-seconder "Trabaho at Kabuhayan," and the 15-seconder "Kalusugan ng Pamilya."

Religious group deserts Ping; to deliver 1M votes to GMA

By Philip C. Tubeza and Norman Bordadora

ONE MILLION votes on election day.

This was the promise made by the ecumenical group Maluwalhating Pilipinas to President Macapagal-Arroyo on her 57th birth anniversary yesterday after its members deserted opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson to join her camp.

"This is a great birthday gift," said First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, who welcomed the group to the administration camp at a press conference in Manila.

Arroyo said the defection was a "personal vindication" for him since it showed that Lacson's own supporters no longer believed in him. Lacson had accused Arroyo of laundering millions of pesos in bank accounts under the alias Jose Pidal.

Bishop Ephraim Perez, the group's head and an alleged former spiritual adviser of deposed President Joseph Estrada, said they withdrew their support from Lacson because they disagreed with his aggressive family planning position on population management and lost heart over his low popularity ratings.

Lacson is trailing the President in the most recent survey with an 11 percent poll rating compared to Ms Macapagal's 31.4 percent, Arroyo noted. He also stressed that although he worked for the transfer, the group did not receive anything in return.

For his part, Lacson said from Pozzorubio, Pangasinan, "This is all about a request for P2.8 million which we have not given, not about population management policies."

Lacson said he received a text message from Perez saying he remained supportive of the senator, despite the decision of his members to withdraw their support from him.

The Lacson campaign team showed the media copies of a fund request for P2.24 million allegedly from the bishops. The amount would cover the group's "consultation with religious personalities and group (sic) for the month of March" in the Ilocos, the Cordilleras, Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog.

"This is too much. (It's) worth even a tenth of his budget," read a marginal note on the request signed by a Lito B, presumably Lacson campaign strategist Angelito Banayo. The note was dated March 4.

"If it's all about money, then the First Gentleman can have them," Lacson said.

"We need people who have conviction (and) people who believe in our cause, not people who are after funding. If it's reasonable funding, that's fine. If it's unreasonable, we don't consider it a loss to our campaign," Lacson said.

Asked if he knew how many members signed the withdrawal of support, Lacson said: "Ask Mike Arroyo."

Perez said his group is composed of 20,000 Protestant bishops, pastors, priests and Muslim leaders who command a million votes nationwide. He claimed he was the overall chair of the so-called Edsa III "uprising" in 2001.

"We believe that the people need a group that has an open mind and will speak up to give guidance and confidence so that love and the truth will prevail over the land," Perez said.

Bro. Eddie quotes Scripture to court Muslim votes

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Just how has the only religious leader running for president been courting Muslim Filipino voters?

Oddly enough, by sticking to the Scriptures, said evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva.

In the light of Muslim Filipinos' reactions to new arrests linking their brothers in key cities to an aborted terror attack in Metro Manila, Villanueva said in a press conference here that Muslims were looking forward to an "honest" Christian as their leader.

Villanueva said Muslim communities have rallied behind his campaign because they trust that a "true Christian" would abide by his vow to better their lives.

"They said that since I was a true Christian, I live a Christian's life. That means hope for us Muslims, they told me, and that they would get justice if I became President," Villanueva said.

He said Islamic scholars make up his key support base, together with various ecumenical church groups that support his party Bangon Pilipinas, because of the need "to prevent a military junta or a coup from breaking out."

He said Muslim Filipino communities and their leaders turned to his party following the arrest of Islamic scholars with alleged links to the Jemaah Islamiyah, a regional militant group.

Villanueva said the reaction of Muslim Filipinos to President Macapagal-Arroyo's preemptive anti-terror strikes last week had again raised the issue of religion in the coming presidential elections.

"This is proof that this government is unprepared to face the problems of our Muslim brothers," he said.

He said injustice and poverty among Muslim Filipinos had been aggravated by the recent anti-Muslim hysteria arising from the government's renewed crackdown on alleged Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah lairs in key cities.

Any controversy that fuels a religious backlash is only aimed at his candidacy, Villanueva claimed.

Even questions raised recently before the Supreme Court about a religious organization's authority to influence voters were meant to weaken his campaign, said Villanueva, founder of the Jesus Is Lord Movement.

"*Pinasabog ito ng ilang mga propagandista sa kabilang kampo para magkaroon ng* religious color *ang pagtakbo ni* Bro. Eddie (Propagandists from other political camps have used this issue to taint the campaign of Bro. Eddie with a religious color)," Villanueva said.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments on the suit next week in this city.

Villanueva had promised Muslims he would set up an impartial commission that would allow extremists and leftist rebels to present their demands, provided these did not destabilize the existing government.

Comelec moves back printing sked

By Martin P. Marfil

THE COMMISSION on Elections has pushed back its deadline—by three days—for the printing and shipping of ballots because of the Holy Week vacation.

Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said yesterday that their original deadline was April 15, but since some of their employees would be taking a vacation on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, they decided to move the deadline to April 18.

"(Every day) except Good Friday, our people will be rendering overtime in the printing of official ballots, election returns and other non-accountable forms because we would like that by April 18 all these forms are delivered, verified and ready for shipment to the various municipal, city and provincial treasurers," Borra told reporters.

The Comelec will also need an additional 300 personnel to man various committees like the shipping committee which is tasked with delivering forms to various municipalities nationwide.

There are about 40 million voters nationwide.

"I am happy to note that while our schedule is so tight, the labor and the continuing effort of our working committees are still on line. But we have to add personnel . . . (we need to work double) time, and a little more budget . . ." Borra said.

The Comelec has asked for an additional budget of about P1.5 billion to be allocated to the military, police and other units needed for the elections.

As part of its preparations, it is all set to test its satellite transmission capabilities for its quick count today.

According to Borra, the VSATs or Very Small Aperture Terminal would be tested to receive data from points in northern Luzon, southern Luzon and Mindanao.

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Power crisis imaginary–Perez

From page A1

from a power shortfall as a high-demand-and-low-supply scenario would push electricity prices up.

"If we don't ring the alarm bells early enough and just let the crisis happen, wouldn't we as a generation company be in a perfect position to take advantage of the situation then?" he pointed out.

"We are doing this now in the hope that people will listen and act to avoid a repeat of the 12-hour brownouts we experienced in the early '90s. The earlier we all move together, the more options the country will have at its fingertips to address the problem," Lopez said.

Anakpawis party-list chair Crispin Beltran said the warning of a looming power crisis was "essentially a threat from the Lopezes" that they could plunge the country into "eternal darkness" if they did not get their way.

"The Lopezes are not fooling anyone. They're creating the problem, so they have the gall and temerity to suggest the solutions which are very self-serving," Beltran said. "A power shortage in 2007 or even earlier can only happen if Meralco and its partners want it so."

Beltran noted that Meralco was buying half of its power supply from Napocor and the other half from Lopez-owned IPPs that charge twice as much as the government.

In a statement, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) blamed the Lopez-owned IPPs—First Gas Power Corp., Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo—for the high cost of electricity that consumers have to shoulder.

Quoting records from the Energy Regulatory Commission, Bayan official Renato Reyes Jr. said electricity sourced from the Lopez-owned IPPs by distribution utility Meralco cost 34 percent to 45 percent more than that generated by Napocor.

In February and March, Meralco bought power from San Lorenzo at P4.93 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) and from Sta. Rita at P5.35 per kWh. Electricity sourced from Napocor, however, cost only P3.68 per kWh.

Another IPP from which Meralco was getting some of its supply requirements, Quezon Power (Philippines) Ltd. Co., sold electricity at P8.64 per kWh, 134 percent higher than the Napocor rate.

"If we allow these IPPs to take over the power sector, we will surely be burdened no end by high power rates, shortage or no shortage," Reyes said.

Reacting to the militant groups' accusations that his warning of a power crisis was only issued to serve his family's business interests, Lopez said this was the remotest thing from his mind.

No sweetheart deals

He said the so-called sweetheart deals that Meralco allegedly had with sister firms in the generation business were all approved by the Meralco board, the Department of Energy and the defunct Energy Regulatory Board.

"I don't see our deals as sweetheart deals. Besides, heading into a deregulated environment, sweetheart contracts will be impossible to get into. Each contract will be subject to certain risks," Lopez said.

He said a distribution firm like Meralco could not afford to get into contracts with power producers that did not offer competitive rates as this would kill the power distributor's business.

The DOE is preparing for the Open Access Transmission Service (OATS) that will allow big power users to use the National Transmission Corp.'s (Transco) lines and get electricity from distributors other than Meralco.

This is supposed to remove the monopoly situation which, according to Lopez, will make "sweetheart deals" impossible.

"Distributors would have to sign up with the generator offering the cheapest and most competitive rates. If not, they will lose their market," he said.

Investor interest

Contrary to Lopez's claim that investors were cool to investing in the power industry, Perez said the government's 10-year power development program "has generated interest among international investors."

He said this was evident in the number of new power plants that would come on stream in the next few years.

For Luzon, Perez expected an additional 565 MW by year-end with the completion of the Kalayaan 3 and 4 projects and the rehabilitation of the Tiwi and Mak-Ban geothermal plants.

An additional 65 MW would come on-stream by 2006 with the Wind Power and the North Wind power projects of the Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp.

Perez reported that a new consortium was set to build an additional 250-400 MW of additional base load capacities in Luzon for completion in January 2008.

Perez said the Visayas expected an additional 140 MW with the completion of the Panay/Pinamucan and the Panay Mirant Power plants by the end of the year. A total of 110 MW from the Northern Negros Geothermal Plant, Palinpinon Plant and Victorias Bioenergy Plant should boost the region's capacity by 2006.

Perez reported that another consortium would establish a new 200-MW base load plant for the Visayas for commissioning in August 2008.

The privatization of the Sucat and Limay plants is also expected to further boost capacities by 1,400 MW within four years. In Mindanao, Perez expected 200 MW in new capacity to be available by 2006.

The consumer watchdog National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Nasecore) said the industry was hardly lacking in interested investors.

Making money

Nasecore president Pete Ilagan, citing data from the Board of Investments, said incentives were granted to four new power projects worth around P108.8 billion. These were expected to generate around 1,305 MW of new capacity.

In a statement, Ilagan said Lopez was not really that concerned about the possibility of a power shortfall coming sooner than expected. Instead, Lopez was more interested in "making more money" for the Lopez-led firms, he said.

In Pozorrubio, Pangasinan, presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson warned of more sweetheart deals involving the Macapagal administration and private sector players in the power industry. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

Bestseller sows seeds of 'purpose-driven' RP

From page A1

"Ang Buhay na May Layunin." The Jesus Christ Saves Global Outreach (JCSGO) church in Caloocan used the book in its "40 Days of Purpose (DOP)" campaign.

PDL has sold more than 16 million copies around the world only 17 months after its launch. It was translated to Tagalog as a result of persistent requests by many Philippine churches to Purpose Driven Ministries, USA. Approval had come in January.

Around 60,000 copies of the translated edition, among the first in the world, were printed and the stocks are fast running out.

Locally, the English edition has sold around 300,000 copies since June last year through the Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) office. At Powerbooks Greenbelt, where it has remained in the top five of the bestseller list since November last year, some 3,000 copies have flown off the shelves.

DOP campaign

Aspiring to be "the purpose-driven model country in Southeast Asia," the Philippines is the first country outside of North America to conduct the 40 DOP campaign on a nationwide level.

There are 1,558 evangelical churches in the country running the seven-weekend seminar, which was officially launched in February, according to Ver Enriquez, managing director of Purpose Driven Ministries Philippines.

At least 150,000 Filipinos are involved in the seminar, which concludes on Easter Sunday. The participants make up 15,000 small groups that discuss the book by chapter.

Enriquez explained: "There is so much interest in PDL because a lot of people are asking what they are here on earth for. They want to know if the book can help them find answers."

Powerbooks Greenbelt manager Jane Mendoza said PDL sales peaked in December last year, when customers bought up to 20 copies each. The 334-page book costs P175.

Gift idea

At first, Mendoza thought the buyers meant to resell the book, but they told her it made a great gift. "I was curious. Deliveries in the morning would all be gone in the afternoon—and it wasn't Harry Potter," she said.

She read it herself, and she understood. Her outlook became more positive, and she noticed she was more patient with complaining customers and erring staff.

Mendoza explained: "People these days are very materialistic, always thinking about how to make money. Now here is a book that says life is not about working and making a profit. There is a reason we are here, a higher purpose: to serve God by serving others."

Enriquez was a missionary to Thailand for eight years. He said he had practiced "mediocre Christianity" since he and his family came back to the Philippines in 1988. He steeped himself in the real estate business but only incurred huge bank debts.

"It was overwhelming; I felt there was no way out," Enriquez said. "The campaign gave me hope and purpose."

'Lord, use me'

After reading PDL, he said he prayed what he called the "silent, dangerous" prayer: "Lord, use me."

Soon enough, his cousin Art Guina, director of Purpose Driven Asia, invited him to manage the PDL office.

"The Christian life becomes more meaningful with a purpose on a day-to-day basis. It allows us to see God in a personal light," said Enriquez who, with his wife Grace, have been volunteers since last September.

Registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission in January as a non-stock, nonprofit organization, Purpose Driven Ministries is targeting 10,000 of the country's estimated 50,000 evangelical churches to take up the 40 DOP campaign this year.

Language of the heart

Myrna Narzo, who edited the Tagalog version, said PDL had to be "read in the language of the heart" because it was a "very good" book. It helped her deal with a good friend's death, she said.

She recalled the chapter that discusses life as a temporary assignment that should be seen in the light of eternity. If she did not have this assurance, she said, grief over the thought of that friend—who never thought twice about fulfilling God's purpose in her own life—would have been much less bearable.

The author Warren, founder of the Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California—one of the largest and best-known churches in the US—has stressed that PDL is not a self-help book.

What it is, according to Palas, the poor housewife in Caloocan, is a book about God: "How good He is, and how He manifests himself in each life that helps another."

Erap seeks 6-day retreat at villa

From page A1

strength for these very trying times," Estrada said in a one-page letter to the anti-graft court trying him for economic plunder.

He asked the Sandiganbayan to allow him to "go on a retreat from Holy Tuesday (April 6) up to Easter Saturday (April 11) at my property in Tanay where I have a chapel and meditation area."

Government prosecutors lost no time in shooting down the idea.

"A little inconvenience can greatly help him experience the sufferings of Christ," said Chief Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio in a telephone interview.

Prosecutors dismissed Estrada's latest plea for temporary liberty as yet another attempt by the 66-year-old deposed leader to enjoy what they called a "country club arrest."

Estrada's 'sufferings'

Estrada now spends more time in his cramped, three-room, two-toilet quarters in the military's Camp Capinpin. He has complained about the unbearable heat in the low-ceiling, one-story building.

Last week, his court-appointed lawyers complained that Estrada's detention quarters had no running water, rendering the flush mechanism of the toilet bowls useless and making it hard for the disgraced leader to shower comfortably.

The lawyers then asked that Estrada be temporarily allowed to use his rest house until water was restored at the camp.

When they failed to get the nod of the court, the lawyers asked that Estrada be allowed to spend two hours at his rest house daily, if only to shower and use the toilet.

Following Estrada's letter to the Sandiganbayan yesterday, defense lawyer Noel Malaya quickly made a manifestation to the court to grant Estrada the "authority to go on a spiritual retreat at his Tanay property for this Holy Week."

Too late

Estrada had said in previous interviews that he was so busy when he was President that sometimes he could only pray for a few minutes a day. Since his detention, he said, he has been able to spend at least about an hour a day in prayer.

Villa-Ignacio doubted that Estrada could get his Lenten wish to reflect on the Passion of Christ at his sprawling estate.

The prosecutor noted that today is the last day of work before the country goes on a five-day Easter break.

"It's too late. There's no more work," Villa-Ignacio said.

Besides, he noted the defense counsel's motion appeared defective because it had "no pleading, no prayer."

"I don't know what they're asking for," he said.

However, Villa-Ignacio, a former judge, said he welcomed Estrada's decision to go on a retreat.

"That's good," he said. "He can reflect on his blessings and misfortunes."

Villa-Ignacio also said a spiritual retreat "can be accomplished anywhere."

Endless ideas

Reflecting on Estrada's latest request, Villa-Ignacio said he found it amusing that the former President and his lawyers never seemed to run out of ideas to secure special treatment for him or to delay the resolution of his cases.

The cases of graft and economic plunder—an offense punishable by a maximum of life imprisonment or death by lethal injection—have dragged on for three years, with no resolution in sight.

Malacañang and Estrada's security escorts recently came under fire for allegedly allowing him to stay at his rest house, located across from Camp Capinpin, without an order from the anti-graft court.

Estrada has also admitted being allowed to visit his mother last Christmas and New Year's Day without the court's authority.

The uproar led to the replacement of the 15-man police team guarding Estrada.

Last month, his lawyers offered to lease Estrada's property to the government for one peso a year in exchange for his being detained there and not at Camp Capinpin.

It wasn't clear when the court would rule on the petitions.

Estrada still commands sizable support, especially among the poor who overwhelmingly voted for him in 1998.

He was forced to abandon the presidency in January 2001 at the height of "people power" protests against alleged corruption in his government.

Ramos, Santiago bury 12 years of bitter feud

From page A1

pew until Sen. Rodolfo Biazon invited her to move up front.

Pulling Ramos' hand with his left and holding Santiago's hand with his right, De Venecia got the two former rivals standing next to each.

Warrior smiles

They shook hands and warmly embraced before television cameras and news photographers.

She, in a white, cotton blouse with little pink flowers, smiled broadly, without any hint of sarcasm.

Ramos, chair emeritus of the ruling Lakas-CMD party, said later that he told Santiago he would campaign for her.

"I believe you," Santiago replied.

Santiago, a thorn on Ramos' side throughout his term, swore it was a "genuine" gesture on her part to reconcile with Ramos.

"The loss of my son was a life-changing moment for me," said the former senator, whose youngest child committed suicide last year. "I no longer entertain concerns about personalities or even political events. I think they are too trivial to be carried around as a burden."

Noting it was Holy Week, Santiago told reporters: "If I'm going to be true as a Christian to the spirit of Holy Week, I should be filled with the spirit of forgiveness and tolerance."

GMA's fuse

Santiago also said she wished the public would be more understanding of Ms Macapagal.

"She's actually a very driven person she has a very short fuse like I do," she said. "But she does not mean to be malicious or to deliberately embarrass or humiliate others. She just gets carried away by her desire not only to improve governance but, if possible, to deliver a perfect performance as chief executive. So her frustration level is very, very low, just like mine."

In her message after the Mass, the President said: "There is no more I can ask for on this day than for peace and solidarity among our people. Let us celebrate Holy Week in the tone of sacrifice, forgiveness and concern for one another."

Almost all the activities here to mark Ms Macapagal's birthday turned out to be the reverse of Malacañang's claim.

Her campaign posters, streamers, banners and tarpaulin billboards filled the yardk

of the centuries-old San Agustin Church and decorated the roads leading to it.

Like a fiesta

The President's allies in Pampanga also laid out a feast for guests and thousands of ordinary folk, many of whom wore campaign shirts rooting for her, running mate Sen. Noli de Castro and members of her K-4 senatorial slate.

Six big tents were set up in the churchyard. Under each tent were 12 round tables seating 12 guests each.

Caterers served meals usually prepared during fiestas.

Another tent fitted with an air-conditioning unit and used during the June 2002 wedding of Pampanga Vice Gov. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, the President's eldest son, and Angela Montenegro, was put up at the back of the convent.

Here, Ms Macapagal had breakfast with Cabinet leaders.

At the crowded churchyard, De Castro shouted from a microphone: "Give your gift to the President on May 10. Pray for her good health and vote for her."

More birthdays at Palace

Senatorial candidate Parouk Hussin told the crowd: "No other President brought more help to Mindanao than GMA ... She has to have six more birthdays in Malacañang."

On a stage, a young man sang a fast-beat campaign ditty hailing the President for bringing social services to the poor.

As the song blared, Ms Macapagal went around the churchyard, shaking hands with well-wishers.

Speaking in Kapampangan toward the end of the Mass, Ms Macapagal told some 1,000 people inside the church that she was the second Macapagal from Lubao to become President. The first was her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal.

At this time, "nothing is more important than doing good service for the country," she said.

For the Holy Week, she urged the crowd to make sacrifices, and show forgiveness and concern for others.

The Mass was concelebrated by 21 priests, led by Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, who reminded government leaders about their duty to the poor.

"We worship the poor, we say we love the poor, and sometimes our motivation does not really help, does not really contribute toward the alleviation of the poverty of the poor," Aniceto said.

"We must not use the poor for our ulterior political motives ... The poor are sacred. The poor are the children of God ... "

Former President Corazon Aquino wished Ms Macapagal "all the best."

Pigs, chicken butchered

"I wish her good health, and success. I hope she will receive whatever blessing she's asking for," Ms Aquino said.

She clarified that she was not endorsing Ms Macapagal's presidential bid.

In Baguio City, reelectionist Rep. Mauricio Domogan tried to get some 200 well-wishers to cheer for Ms Macapagal by supervising the ritual butchering of two pigs and a chicken in honor of the President.

Domogan chanted a prayer to the Igorot gods for Ms Macapagal's poll victory.

In Manila, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo told reporters his birthday presents to the President included 57 dozen roses, a private dinner date, and the defection of religious leaders supporting presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson—worth one million votes, he said.

He again dismissed rumors that his relationship with Ms Macapagal had lost its sweetness.

'Beautiful marriage'

"There's no strain. We're very, very happy. We're happily married," Arroyo said.

He added: "*Maganda ang* relationship *namin ni Pangulo, napakaganda* (My relationship with the President is beautiful, very beautiful). Every day, we go to Mass and receive communion."

Arroyo said the President was even very happy when he gave her the first dozen roses he had bought on Sunday at the popular Dangwa flower market on Dimasalang Street, Manila.

Arroyo said he gave the first dozen roses to the President in Pampanga, and left the rest in Malacañang. "She'll be surprised when she comes back and sees Malacañang filled with roses."

There was supposed to be a party for the President but she canceled it so she could buckle down to work even on her birthday, he said.

Arroyo dismissed as black propaganda from the opposition reports that he had not made himself visible in her campaign sorties so as not to embarrass her.

Last year, Lacson accused Arroyo of maintaining millions in a bank account under the alias Jose Pidal, which the First Gentleman denied.

Arroyo said he could not join the President in all her sorties since he and their children had their own "assignments" to help her get elected.

"I have my own role. I have my own assignment and this does not need to be shown. You'll just see the results," Arroyo said.

As an example of his work, he cited what he said was the defection from Lacson of religious leaders who, he said, promised to deliver a million votes for the President on election day.

"This is one of those (assignments)," Arroyo said. *With a report from Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Reyes faces slay raps over latest shoot-out

By Armand N. Nocum

MULTIPLE murder and graft charges have been filed anew against Angelo Reyes and other National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force officials with the Ombudsman for the alleged rubout of suspected kidnappers by Naktf operatives on Thursday.

Claiming there had been no encounter but a rubout, the new charges against Reyes et al were filed by the mother of one of the five suspected kidnappers who survived the alleged shoot-out.

Cecilia Elizalde, mother of suspect Christopher Elizalde, yesterday vehemently denied that her son was a kidnapper.

This was the second such case filed against Reyes and Naktf operatives.

Earlier, Lorna Ramoso, wife of Rogelio Ramoso, an alleged civilian agent and close-in bodyguard of Reyes, had charged the Naktf chief, and ranking military and police officials before the Ombudsman with killing her husband and staging the kidnap and rescue of individuals to gain the trust and confidence of the Chinese-Filipino community.

Elizalde, 26, sustained multiple bullet wounds during the April 1 encounter with Naktf operatives in Navotas. He was brought to the Tondo Medical Center.

The driver of the alleged kidnappers' Mitsubishi sedan, identified as Reynaldo Misa, and two other companions died on the spot. Elizalde and another companion were brought to the hospital, but the latter expired later.

The five were tagged as members of the Allan Balimbingan kidnap-for-ransom group.

In her three-page complaint, the elder Elizalde said that on the day of the alleged shoot-out, a certain "Allan and Leon" fetched her son from their house in Fairview, Quezon City.

She said she trusted them because they were known to be close friends of her son, having introduced themselves as fellow "Waray" and as "military agents." She said she was surprised to see in the news later that her son had been wounded in the shoot-out.

"It is not true that the group my son was with engaged the Naktf operatives in a shootout because most of them were shot at close range," she said in Filipino.

She said she also learned from witnesses later that a certain "Aligarbes," who also survived the shootout, was later shot in the head by a Naktf operative although he was begging for his life.

She said she found it strange that the "Leon and Allan" who fetched her son were not with him during the shoot-out.

Other respondents in the case filed by Elizalde were Col. Danilo Servando, Col. Jonas Sumagaysay, Sgt. Rodimar Saya and other Naktf and police operatives.

Customs men want TF axed

By Martin P. Marfil

BUREAU of Customs employees want the anti-smuggling task force headed by anti-kidnap czar Angelo Reyes abolished.

A group calling itself Port Workers, Employees and Representatives Solid Alliance or Pwersa yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to abolish the newly created National Anti-Smuggling Task Force or Nastf.

"Instead of recognizing our efforts last year when the Bureau of Customs collected a historic high of more than P100 billion, Mrs. Arroyo opted to further insult our agency by creating Nastaf. This is like saying Malacañang does not trust customs people to do their own jobs well," Pwersa chair Rommie Pagulayan said.

The presence of military agents of the task force in different divisions at the Bureau of Customs has reportedly created a stir among customs employees and port workers.

The anti-smuggling task force was created on March 10 through Executive Order No. 297 for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the President regarding violations of tax laws.

But Pwersa secretary general Albert Jardin, who is also the president of the Customs Brokers Group, expressed fears that Nastf men might just end up mulcting grease money from owners of apprehended shipments.

Pwersa accused Malacañang of creating the new task force to court "certain business interests" who wanted an anti-smuggling campaign in exchange for political support.

"While there is the benefit of the doubt about Nastf sincerity, our previous experiences taught us to be wary of such task forces as we ended up being victimized by them," Jardin said.

Based on past experience, Jardin said that task forces were usually formed at the start of an administration and not before the end of its term.

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Trial of Sef Gonzales starts

From page A1

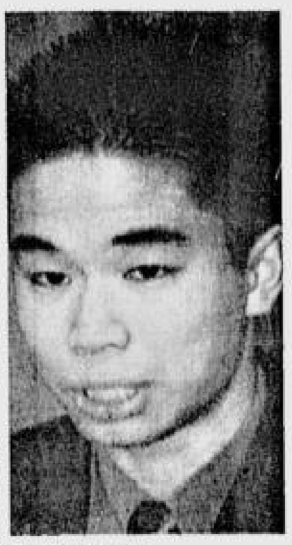
sister," Crown Prosecutor Mark Tedeschi told the New South Wales Supreme Court on the first day of the trial of 23-year-old Sef Gonzales.

Gonzales has pleaded not guilty to the brutal murder of his parents and sister at their North Ryde home in Sydney on July 10, 2001. He faces life imprisonment if convicted.

Tedeschi said Gonzales blamed his family for his problems.

The accused, according to the prosecutor, feared his 46-year-old father Teddy, his 43-year-old mother Mary Loiva and his 18-year-old sister Clodine would disown him because of his failing grades at the university and because they disapproved of his girlfriend.

Tedeschi said Gonzales also stood to inherit his family's assets in Australia and the Philippines estimated at A$10 million (US$6.35 million). Teddy Gonzales had a highly successful legal practice specializing in immigration matters.



GONZALES

At the opening day of the trial, the court was told that for nearly a month in 2001, Gonzales surfed the Internet for poisonous seeds and searched for ways to kill people.

Gonzales allegedly tried to poison his mother a week before the murders. She was hospitalized on July 3, 2001 due to "fever, severe abdominal pain and bloody diarrhea."

Seven days later, Gonzales allegedly stabbed to death his parents and sister. The throats of Mary Loiva and Clodine were found slashed.

Gonzales called the police to report the killings and later made a tearful plea to the public for information on the killer. He was arrested in June last year.

It was not certain how long the trial would last.

With an AFP report

Mark Anthony back in drug rehab center

From page A1

the Philippine National Police's Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig—watched the young man struggle with every lift of his lean frame.

They knew him from the movies and TV. They knew his life story. He had done this before.

Actor Mark Anthony Fernandez is back in rehabilitation after what seemed to be an inspiring victory against drug addiction three years ago.

Supt. Bonaparte Francisco, Curedd director and father figure to around 2,500 wards, doesn't mind. After all, character is measured not by how many times a man falls but by how many times he rises.

"Mark's is not a hopeless case," Francisco told the INQUIRER. "He underwent rehabilitation and got hooked again—it happens. He just needs time, patience, and all the support he can get."

The son of movie couple Rudy Fernandez and Alma Moreno, Mark was admitted to Curedd more than a month ago. His father had personally sought the help of Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay, PNP's point man against illegal drugs. Mark was doing drugs again; he could be frying his brain.

Video presentation

Aglipay was immediately sympathetic. Mark could have been anybody's son, and he would still need help. This was the mind-set that Aglipay had earlier made the centerpiece of a 15-minute VCD presentation, a key part of the PNP's campaign to educate the public on the horrors of drug addiction.

Titled "Imagine," with the classic John Lennon song for theme, the video is shown during forums in schools, town halls and barangays nationwide.

Among the visual highlights of the short film is a drug dependent's suicide note, the grotesque body of a man slain in a drug deal gone wrong, and an addict shooting up. Aglipay hopes this would motivate parents and all adults to keep children out of harm's way.

At Curedd, Aglipay and his army of workers have one goa—to give their life back to drug dependents like Mark.

Mark was returned to rehab against his will. Thus, he was cranky and cynical at first. The first social worker who talked to him described him as "initially uncooperative but generally manageable."

Violy Fernandez, Curedd's head nurse, didn't find this unusual. Like all the others on their first day, she said, Mark was undergoing a process called "rejection."

Angry at Rudy

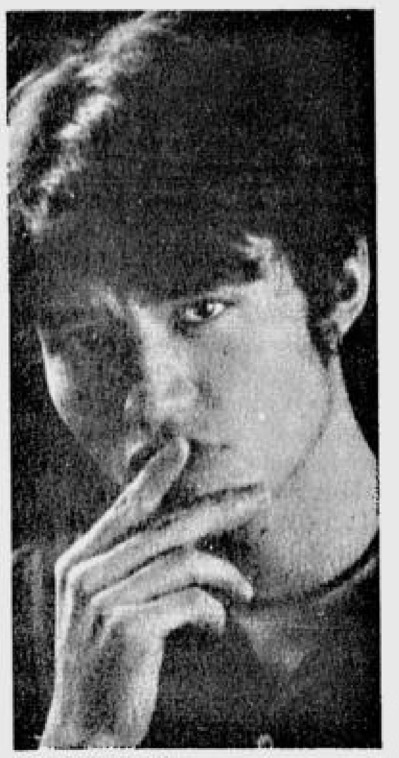
Patients learned to accept the situation soon enough, she said.

Mark was angry at his father for turning him in, and asked to talk only with his mother, Francisco said. "He kept reminding me of his valuables and asked me to 'please tell Mama' about them."

The young man will get better, Francisco was sure. "And then his father will turn out to be the person he loves most, you'll see."

Meanwhile, an initial two-month "no visitor" policy for all patients applies to Mark, so friends and relatives can't visit until after another month. This is necessary to allow custodians to assess every ward's condition, according to Francisco, who is a psychologist.

For now, the custodians can only speculate why Mark is incoherent and given to long gaps while speaking. He told them he had done only marijuana, but his father was sure he had tried everything there is. Curedd is withholding diagnosis until the end of the two-month period.



FERNANDEZ

Cold turkey

The 25-year-old actor, one of the "Gwapings" trio in local movies 14 years ago—along with Jomari Yllana and Eric Fructuoso—has so far been receptive to the "cold turkey" program, also known as "abrupt withdrawal." Unlike some other methods tried before, this approach uses no drugs to flush out illegal drugs from the patients' system. Instead, they're given a rigid physical fitness program to make them sweat.

A daily program goes like this: laundry from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m.; schooling and athletics from 8 a.m. to 12 noon; lunch till 1 p.m.; siesta till 2 p.m.; group dynamics, music therapy, prayers, and drills till 4 p.m.; dinner, bath, and personal hygiene till 5 p.m.; and spiritual sessions before bedtime at 8 p.m.

Mark shares a dormitory with 25 patients, and gets no special treatment. He also wears a plain white shirt and a pair of white shorts like the rest.

Part of instilling discipline, a key element in rehabilitation, is to give patients "tougher" jobs if they commit mistakes. Anyone who gets into a fight performs an additional job, say throwing garbage, according to Francisco.

Walk like a crab

Mark hasn't made a mistake so far, the superintendent said. In fact, he added, the actor is now one of the friendliest at Curedd, always in the company of other patients. At times he is seen walking sideways like a crab, arms behind his back, while greeting officials and visitors. Among Curedd patients, this is a sign of respect.

Here Mark will stay there for the next six to 12 months, depending on his progress. Francisco said the longer a patient abstained, the greater the possibility he wouldn't get hooked again.

That Sunday in Bicutan, Mark stopped at push-up No. 24.

"That's all I can do for now," he apologized to Francisco, his face flushed, his arms trembling from the effort.

"You can do better next time," replied the superintendent from a bench nearby.

Mark smiled: "*Salamat po, sir. Sagot n'yo po ang buhay ko* (Thank you, sir, my life is in your hands)."

Then he walked back to his dormitory—sideways, like a crab.

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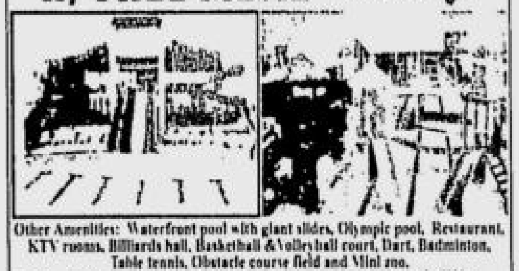

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we come to you again for the following intentions:

- That every Filipino citizen shall exercise responsibly his right & duty to vote
- To ensure the conduct of honest, orderly and peaceful elections
- To ensure the safety of all polling personnel, teachers, watchers, candidates and their supporters
- To thwart all works of evil, divisiveness, strife, discord, greed and deception
- That the result of the elections be accepted peacefully by the people
- That the elected leaders embrace public service that is God-fearing and selfless
- That reconciliation, healing and unity come upon the people
- That the Will of God prevail and righteousness reign in the land.

Lord, hear our prayer!

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More RP peacekeepers to trouble spots

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES may send peacekeepers as well as military advisers to serve in United Nations missions in the Ivory Coast, Sudan, Eritrea-Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"The Philippines is among those considered by the UN as one of the pool countries for peacekeepers so we might just be asked to provide people for such missions," said DFA Secretary Delia Albert in a recent briefing.

Contributing peacekeepers is in line with the Philippines' pursuit of world peace, being a responsible member of the UN and the Security Council, Albert added.

The UN is helping bolster peace between the warring factions in Sudan, Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), which have been engulfed in civil war. It is also helping the Ethiopians and Eritreans settle their simmering boundary dispute.

Meeting with Annan

Albert said that in her meeting with Secretary General Kofi Annan at UN Headquarters in New York on March 19, she assured him that the Philippines would continue to be an active partner in UN efforts to make the world a safer and more peaceful place to live in.

"The administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo has recognized the importance of international cooperation in addressing security issues, even if those issues do not yet directly bear on the Philippines," she said.

The President, she added, "knows that in our infinitely complex world, no one can live in isolation and simply ignore the hardships of others."

The Philippines has 55 civilian police officers deployed in the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), keeping ethnic tensions in check in the troubled Serbian province.

There are also 145 Filipino soldiers serving as Headquarters Support Force for the UN Mission in Liberia (UNIMIL).

Another 70 Filipino soldiers and 40 civilian police officers are serving under the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

OFWs on island off Iran not stranded, DFA finds

WORK contracts—not dire straits—await about 100 overseas Filipino workers on Kish Island who were earlier reported to be stranded and living in desolate conditions there.

Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Jose Brillantes said a three-member legal and consular team found the situation of the Filipinos on Kish, an island off the Persian Gulf, "normal and manageable," with most of them expecting to return to work in the nearby United Arab Emirates.

A number of Filipinos working in the UAE have been using Kish Island as a sanctuary while waiting for the renewal of their Emirates working permits and residency papers. Instead of returning to the Philippines, they wait it out on the island which has been declared a free trade zone and tourist destination by Iran.

When a plane from Kish carrying mostly returning workers crashed in Sharjah, UAE, in February, the exit requirement was repealed by the Emirates government.

Some of the OFWs, unable to secure new jobs or failing to be recalled by their former employers, were stranded on the island for months. Media reports said they were sleeping on the streets and taking on odd jobs to survive.

Brillantes said such cases were isolated and that the Philippine embassy in the Iranian capital of Teheran knew about these. Some migrant workers' groups here and in the UAE, in fact, have begun raising funds for plane tickets to the Philippines for the stranded workers.

The foreign affairs team recommended that the workers get in touch with the Philippine embassy as soon as they get back to the UAE and become regular employees with valid employment visas.

"They should now be part of the system so they can be within the ambit of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration," Brillantes said.

The team, comprised of Bert Salvador, Sheila Solas and Eloisa Marmon, also visited Teheran, Amman in Jordan, and Beirut, Lebanon. *Jerome Aning*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 6, 2004
Tuesday of Holy Week

1st Reading: Is 49:1-6
Gospel: Jn 13:21-33, 36-38

Jesus was distressed in spirit and said plainly, "Truly, one of you will betray me." The disciples then looked at one another, wondering who he meant. One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining near Jesus; so Simon Peter signaled him to ask Jesus whom he meant.

And the disciple who was reclining near Jesus asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "I shall dip a piece of bread in the dish, and he to whom I give it, is the one."

So Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And as Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus then said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

None of the others reclining at table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. As he had the common purse, they may have thought that Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or, "Give something to the poor." Judas left as soon as he had eaten the bread. It was night.

When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. God will glorify him, and he will glorify him very soon.

My children, I am with you for only a little while; you will look for me, but, as I already told the Jews, so now I tell you: where I am going you cannot come.

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but afterwards you will." Peter said, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I am ready to give my life for you." Jesus answered, "To give your life for me! Truly, I tell you, the cock will not crow before you have denied me three times."

Commentary

John (or rather the Johannine school) places himself as near to Jesus as he places Judas away. Such dualism is characteristic of John's gospel: light/ darkness, above/below, etc. John is "reclining near Jesus," whispering to him; but Judas goes out, and "it was night."

But notice that there are two betrayers in this reading; the other is Peter. "The cock will not crow before you have denied me three times," Jesus said to him; in other words, "before morning." But Peter had the courage (or perhaps the opposite) to wait for forgiveness; and he was forgiven (Jn 21). Tragically, Judas didn't wait; he too would have been forgiven. If he was just greedy for money he should have been happy; but he was plunged into despair; he must have had some plan that went wrong—some plan to speed things up. It was typical of him, then, not to wait. In a tragic twisted way he died for his Master. The writer of these commentaries in 1998, Fr. Fernando Torres, wrote, "Without doubt, God the Father, slow to anger and rich in mercy, had pity on him."

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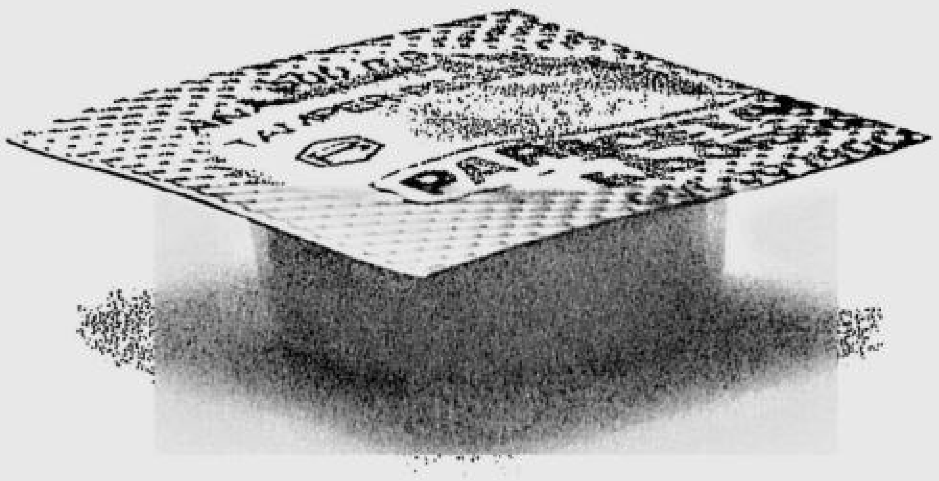
SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LEGAL ETHICS (JUDICIAL ETHICS)— Constitutionally mandated duty of judges to decide cases within 90 days—The Code of Judicial Conduct enjoins trial court judges, as paragons of justice in the first instance, to dispose of the court's business promptly and to decide cases and motions within the required periods. Section 15(1) of Article VIII of the Constitution mandates them to do so within three months from the date of submission for decision or final resolution. This court, through Administrative Circular No. 1, also specifically requires all of them to act promptly on all motions and interlocutory matters pending before their courts. Hence, it is well-settled that the unexplained failure of judges to decide cases and resolve motions and incidents within the reglementary period of 90 days, which is fixed by the Constitution and the law, renders them administratively liable. The Supreme Court has stressed often enough that delay in the administration of justice undermines the faith of the people in the judiciary, which is expected to hear their supplications promptly. Delay reinforces in the mind of litigants the impression that the wheels of justice grind ever so slowly. As the time-honored principle goes, "justice delayed is justice denied." [Justice Panganiban, Third Division, Spouses Morta vs Bagagnan, A. M> No. MTJ-03-1513, November 12, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

Tapos na ang sakit ng ulo.



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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Dozens killed as US-led troops battle Shiites

BAGHDAD, Iraq—The top US administrator in Iraq declared a radical Shiite cleric an "outlaw" Monday after his supporters rioted in Baghdad and four other cities in fighting that killed at least 52 Iraqis, eight US troops and a Salvadoran soldier.

The fiercest battle took place Sunday in the streets of Sadr City, Baghdad's largest Shiite neighborhood, where black-garbed Shiite militiamen fired from rooftops and behind buildings at US troops, killing seven Americans. At least 30 Iraqis were killed and more than 110 wounded in the fighting, doctors said.

Meanwhile, US troops on Monday sealed off Fallujah ahead of a major operation code-named "Vigilant Resolve," aimed at pacifying the city, one of the most violent cities in the Sunni Triangle, the heartland of the insurgency against the American occupation.

US commanders have been vowing a massive response after insurgents killed four American security contractors in the city, west of Baghdad, on Wednesday. Residents dragged the Americans' bodies through the streets, hanging two of their charred corpses from a bridge, in horrifying scenes that showed the depth of anti-US sentiment in the city.

Some 1,200 Marines and two batallions of Iraqi security forces were poised to enter the city in a raid to capture suspected insurgents, officials said. They would not say when the sweep would begin.

The insurgency that has plagued US troops in Iraq for months has been led by Sunni Muslims. But Sunday's clashes in Baghdad and three other cities threatened to open a dangerous new front: a confrontation with Iraq's powerful Shiite Muslim majority, which has until now largely avoided violence with the Americans.

Hundreds were wounded in Sunday's violence in Baghdad, Najaf, Nasiriyah and Amarah. The riots were ignited by the arrest of an aide to anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Followers of al-Sadr also took over the offices of the governor in the southern city of Basra.

In response, L. Paul Bremer, the top US administrator in Iraq, declared al-Sadr an "outlaw" who threatens Iraq's security.

"Effectively he is attempting to establish his authority in the place of the legitimate authority. We will not tolerate this. We will reassert the law and order which the Iraqi people expect," Bremer told a security team meeting convened to discuss how to respond to Sadr.

Bremer did not say if US authorities would move to arrest al-Sadr, but the declaration stepped up the confrontation with the 30-year-old firebrand cleric, who fiercely opposes the US occupation and is backed by a militia known as the "Al-Mahdi Army."

"There is no room for militias in the new Iraq. ... If there are militias that seek to exert control, we will address that head on. And that is clearly what we are doing right now," a senior US official said Monday.

Al-Sadr does not hold widespread support among Iraq's Shiites, where many see him as too young and inexperienced to lead. But he does have the backing of hundreds of young seminary students and many impoverished Shiites, devoted to him because of his anti-US stance and the memory of his father, a Shiite religious leader gunned down by suspected Saddam agents in 1999.

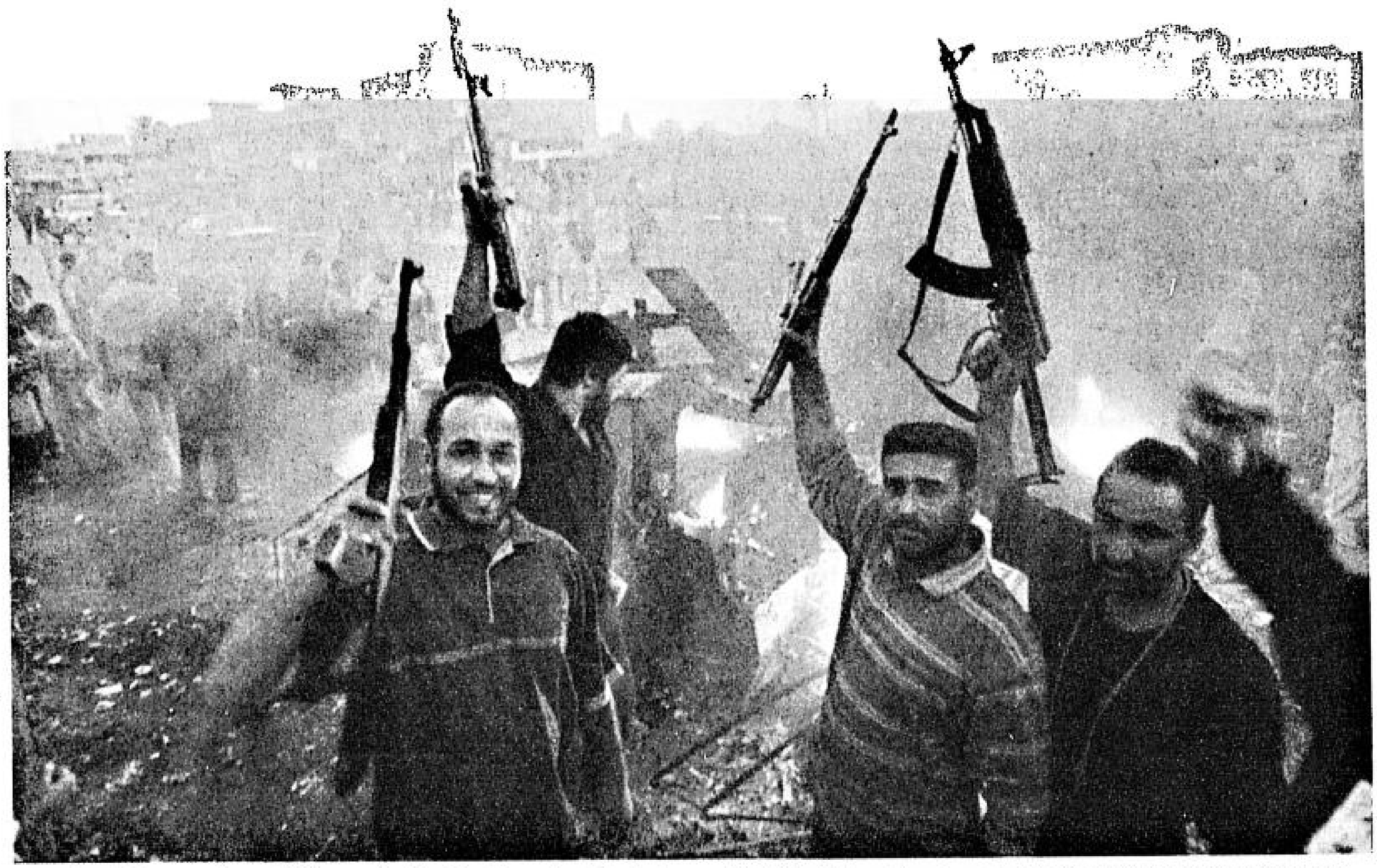
The violence Sunday was a sign of al-Sadr's strength.

The US troops moved into Baghdad's Sadr City—named after Muqtada's father—after militiamen took over five police stations in the neighborhood. At least two Humvees burned in the streets, and tanks rolled in, crushing cars.

Al-Chawadir hospital, one of two hospitals in Sadr City, received 28 dead Iraqis and 90 wounded from the fighting, said a doctor, Qassim Saddam. Another hospital reported two dead and 21 wounded.

By Monday morning, the militiamen had been forced out of the police stations, and US tanks were parked in one of the neighborhood's main markets. Many stalls in the market were burned out, and buildings were pockmarked with bullet holes.

During a street protest by some 5,000 people Sunday near the Shiite holy city of Najaf, al-Sadr supporters opened fire on the base of Spanish troops, sparking a battle that lasted several hours. *Reuters*



MUSLIM Shiite members of Shiite radical leader Moqtada al-Sadr Army of Mehdi militia celebrate near a burning US Humvee in Baghdad's al-Sadr City district late April 4. The radical cleric, whose militiamen are clashing with US-led coalition troops in Iraq, told his supporters to "terrorize" the enemy as demonstrations were no longer any use. AFP

Ringleader in Madrid train bombings killed in blast

LEGANES, Spain—The suspected Tunisian ringleader of last month's Madrid train bombings blew himself up with three or four accomplices after police cornered them in a suburban Madrid apartment, officials said on Sunday.

Serhane ben Abdelmajid Farkhet, 35, known as El Tunecino (The Tunisian), was one of several men who chanted defiant Islamic slogans in Arabic before detonating a charge on Saturday that also killed a policeman, Interior Minister Angel Acebes said.

Like the Tunisian, one of the other bombers to die was among six men sought in international arrest warrants issued last week, Acebes said. A source close to the investigation said a third wanted man may also be among the dead.

"The core group of those who carried out the terrorist act (the March 11 train bombings) have been detained or died in the collective suicide," Acebes said. "We have to highlight the magnificent work done by the security forces." Fifteen police officers were wounded by the explosion in Leganes, a suburb of the capital. One was in serious condition.

Acebes said evidence at the scene—including 10 kg of unexploded dynamite and 200 detonators—showed the group was poised to attack again.

The raid capped a tumultuous period in a country just coming to grips with the aftermath of the train bombings, which killed 191 people and wounded 1,900.

The train bombings struck three days before Spain's March 14 general elections when voters surprisingly threw out a strongly pro-American political party in favor of incoming Socialist Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, who is threatening to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq.

Then authorities reported finding letter bombs sent to three media outlets on Thursday, a bomb planted beneath a high-speed rail line on Friday on the eve of the busy Easter holiday travel season, and the suicide blast on Saturday.

Acebes pinned the thwarted high-speed rail bombing on the same group that planted the rucksack bombs on four packed commuter trains last month. No suspects have been named in the letter bombs. *Reuters*

US may have sent Guatemalan boy home to his death

US AUTHORITIES may have sent a 16-year-old Guatemalan boy who had sought asylum home to his death.

Members of the street gang that Edgar Chocoy was trying to escape in Guatemala City killed him March 27—17 days after he was deported from Colorado, according to Kim Salinas, a Fort Collins immigration lawyer who had pressed Chocoy's case to stay in the United States.

Assailants on a central street shot Chocoy twice, once in the head, said Chocoy's aunt Virginia Lucero Guzman, 34, in an interview from Washington, DC. She had been visiting Guatemala at the time.

Before his deportation, Chocoy had warned this could happen.

"I know that they will kill me if I am returned to Guatemala. They will kill me because I left their gang," Chocoy stated in an affidavit filed in Denver's federal immigration court in support of his application for asylum.

US immigration officials "deported him" and "knew they (gang members) could kill him," Chocoy's mother, Margarita Guzman, 47, said Friday from California. "I feel so sad." *NYT*

STILL AN AFGHAN GOLD MINE

An Afghan farmer milks poppies in a poppy field in Sangeen, in the southern province of Helmand April 2. US forces are finding increasing quantities of drugs during raids on lairs of Taliban and al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan, a top general has said. Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

Arab summit deadlock

CAIRO—Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak offered Sunday to meet fellow Arab leaders anywhere, "even on the moon," in order to settle on a venue that has eluded them since their summit collapsed in Tunis last week. Morocco could be a compromise location, an Arab diplomat said, in an effort to break the deadlock between the Arab states that back Egypt's offer to stage the summit and those who support Tunisia's right to host the event. Some Arabs had looked to the summit to take a tough line on Israel after its forces assassinated Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin on March 22. *AFP*

Rwanda genocide

KIGALI—President Paul Kagame on Sunday denounced the "deliberate failure" of international powers to stop the slaughter of up to one million people, at the opening of the formal commemoration of the Rwandan genocide 10 years ago. "We should always bear in mind that genocide, wherever it happens, represents the international community's failure, which I would in fact caracterize as deliberate, as a convenient failure, to take responsibility," Kagame told an international conference in Kigali. Praising survivors of the carnage and heaping blame on global powers who many say could have stopped it, the three-day international conference was the first of multiple events to mark the 1994 genocide, which according to UN figures killed 800,000 and according to Kigali led to one million deaths. *AFP*

Voyage that killed 353

SYDNEY—An Iraqi man wept in court Monday as he was accused of helping organize a people smuggling-operation which ended tragically with the drowning of 353 asylum-seekers off northern Australia. Khaleed Daoed, 37, listened to testimony from survivors of the 2001 tragedy at the start of a three-day committal hearing in Brisbane, where he faces 12 charges that could put him behind bars for 20 years. Daoed was extradited from Sweden last year accused of selling tickets and keeping the books for two people-smuggling bids—the doomed Siev-X which sank with more than 350 people aboard in October 2001 and an earlier voyage that successfully brought 147 asylum seekers to Australia. *AFP*

MEGAWATI casting her vote. AP

Suharto's old party expects gains as Indonesians vote

JAKARTA—Indonesians voted Monday in an election expected to boost support for the Golkar party founded by former dictator Suharto, less than six years after he stepped down in disgrace.

The outcome of the legislative election could be crucial to President Megawati Sukarnoputri's hopes of keeping her job in the country's first direct presidential election in July.

Opinion polls have shown Golkar replacing Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) as the biggest party in the 550-seat parliament, with discontent prevailing over lackluster growth, high unemployment, rising prices and corruption.

"I hope that Golkar wins the election because I hope that my younger sisters will have a better fate than mine," said garbage collector Tatan Suparna.

"Despite (Golkar) once having been a party of Suharto, at least education fees and the cost of living were lower then."

More than 147 million people in the world's third largest democracy are eligible to vote. Polls closed at 1 p.m. and first results were expected Monday evening.

National police said there were no reports of violence despite earlier fears of election-related terror attacks by Islamic radicals. Nearly 190,000 police nationwide were guarding the ballots.

Golkar leader and parliament speaker Akbar Tanjung was upbeat as he voted in the smart Widya Chandra ministerial housing complex.

Tanjung held several high posts under Suharto, who resigned in May 1998. But the Golkar leader said his party had no remaining links to the old regime, which was characterized by massive corruption and human rights abuses.

"We have already mentioned we are a new Golkar, we are committed to reform and we are also anti-corruption," he told reporters.

"We are also committed to reforming our political system by welcoming new political parties but we also want to compete with (them)."

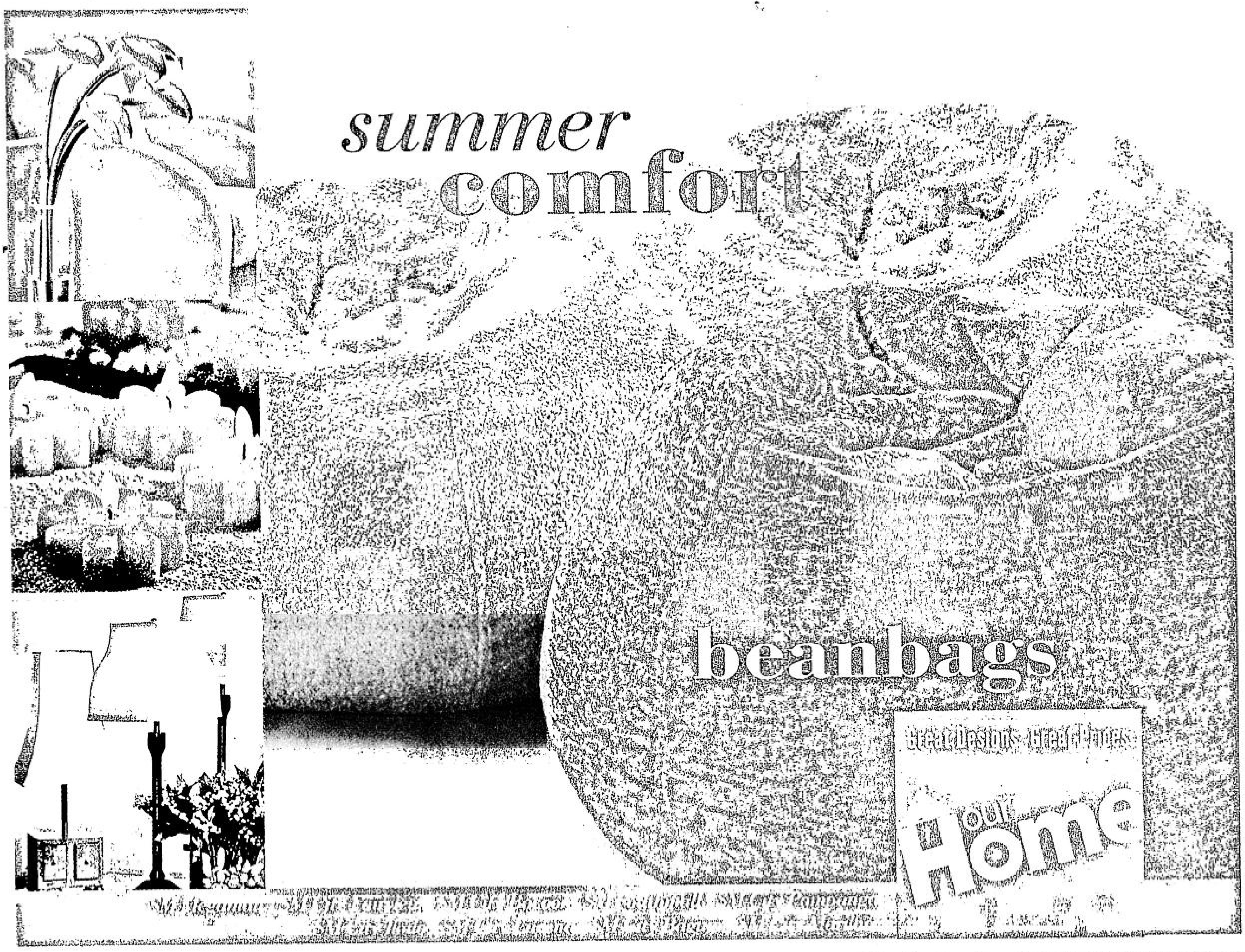
Twenty-four parties are contesting Monday's elections in contrast to the Suharto years when Golkar—one of only three permitted parties—had the odds heavily stacked in its favor.

Tanjung predicted his party would win about 30 percent of the vote, compared to 22 percent in 1999. He said people "see there is no change in their lives, they are suffering because of the current economic situation, unemployment is increasing, prices are high and that is why the people are not happy.

"They know that Golkar has the experience and that is why I think they like to see Golkar in power again."

Half the country's 212 million people still live on less than $2 a day, ten million are jobless and 30 million underemployed.

Megawati voted with her husband, businessman Taufik Kiemas, in the smart Jakarta district of Menteng. Her PDI-P won 34 percent of the vote in 1999. *AFP*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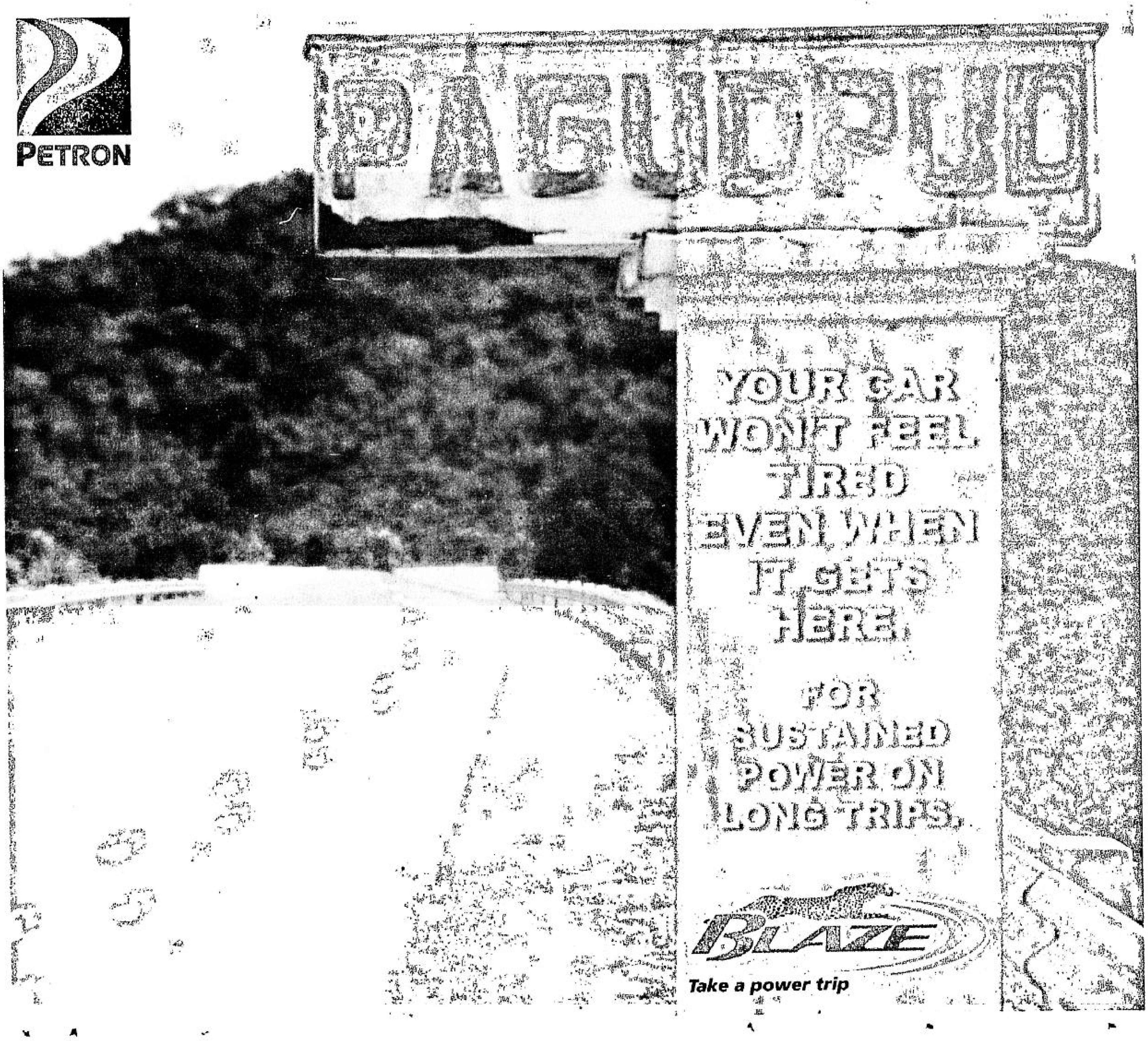
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OPINION

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Crucifixion

EDITORIALS

HOLY WEEK reaches its nadir, from the physical point of view, on Good Friday with the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.

Before He was crucified, Jesus was beaten with a whip known as a flagrum, a long sturdy handle with long leather thongs attached to it. Sharp pieces of bone and lead were woven into the thongs.

A person condemned to crucifixion was scourged by being beaten on the bare back and shoulders with a flagrum. The condemned man often came close to death before the beating stopped. The beating would leave a mass of torn and bleeding tissue. (This was shown very graphically in Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ.") In Jesus' case, after being beaten, He was also "crowned" with thorns.

Jesus then had to carry His Cross (or crossbar, depending on which biblical or scholarly account you believe) to Golgotha, the site of the Crucifixion. After suffering all of this, He had to endure one of the most excruciating and most cruel types of death ever known to man. It was such a cruel death that Roman citizens were exempt from it. It was reserved for slaves or enemies of the state. Centurions drove long nails through the wrists and through the feet. Jesus thus suffered the most agonizing pain as He tried to raise Himself to be able to breathe. To make sure of His death, a soldier thrust a spear into Christ's side.

Why did Christ have to be crucified? According to St. Augustine and other theologians, Christ died in atonement for the sins of humanity, following the doctrines laid out in books like Leviticus, known as the Law of Moses. By taking part in the sacrifice one is "washed in the blood of the lamb" and is "imputed" the perfection of Christ. Jesus paid fully the price by completely fulfilling the law of Moses and then suffering the punishment for wrongdoers, thus satisfying the demands of justice.

More than 2,000 years after the Crucifixion of Christ, the Filipino nation is impaled on the cross of poverty and corruption. How much longer will it suffer excruciating and agonizing pain? Will this "crucifixion" ever end? Who will be the "messiah" who will save the nation from its misery and pain? It is also the Filipino who can save himself and his nation from this continuing impalement on the cross of poverty and corruption. In the ultimate analysis, it can be said, the Filipino has brought this situation upon himself by failing to choose the right leaders who could correct the sorry situation the nation is now in.

Resurrection

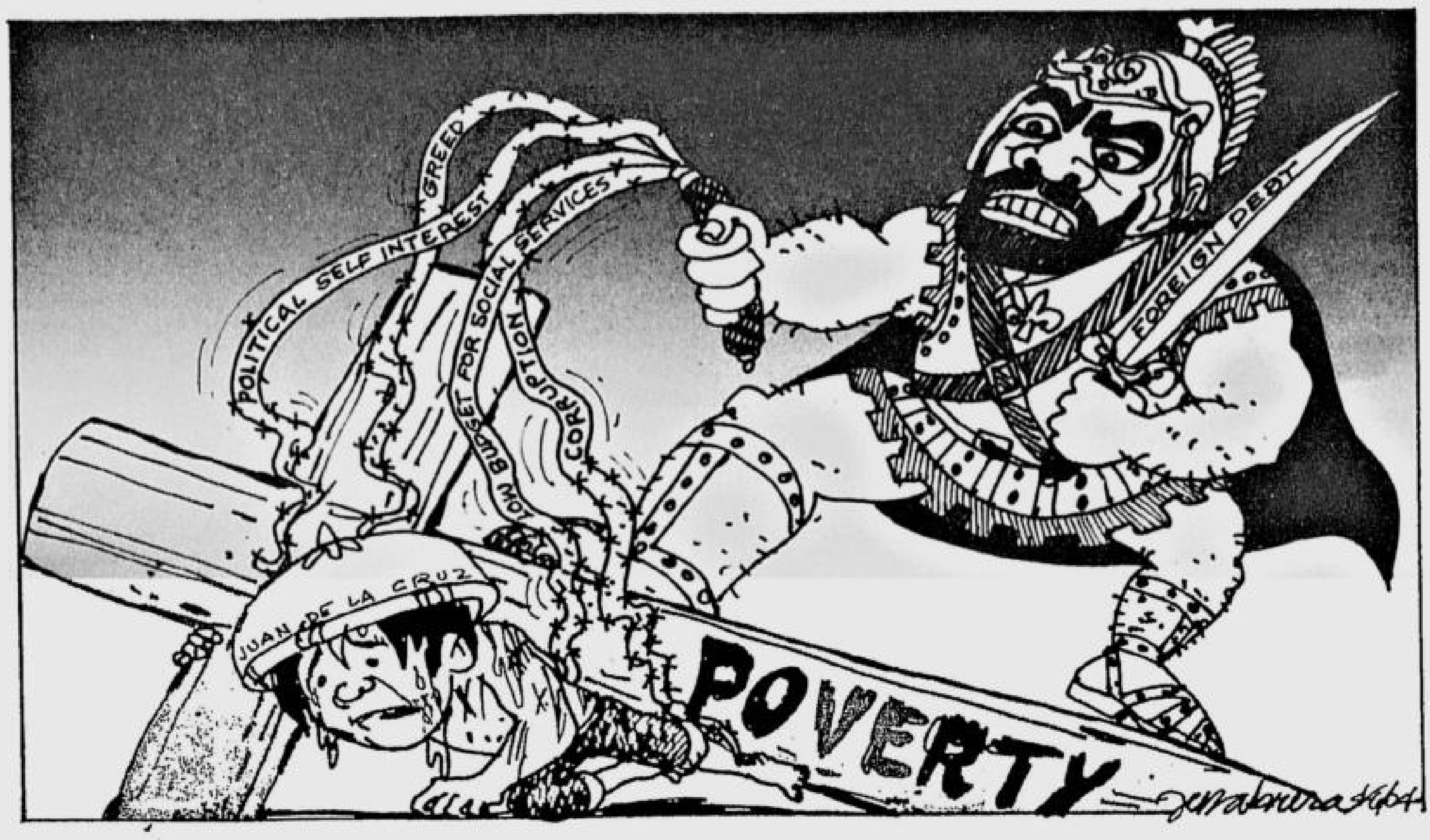
FILIPINOS tend to give more emphasis to Good Friday than to Easter Sunday. They focus more on the death of Christ than on His Resurrection. And yet the Resurrection is at the heart, at the center of Christianity. Christianity would be futile and meaningless if Christ had not been resurrected. For Paul, the Resurrection of Christ is the essence-the heart of the believer's existence.

The Resurrection of Christ is one of the many distinguishing features that separate Christianity from other religions. Other religions are based on the philosophy of life or ethical teachings of their founders. In contrast, Christianity is based on historical events that took place in time and in space. The Crucifixion and the Resurrection are recounted by eyewitnesses in the Gospels.

Peter Walker, who delivered lectures on theology at Oxford, said that the central truth of the Resurrection is that "Jesus is alive today." This means that a relationship with Jesus is as possible for Christian believers today as it was for the disciples who knew Him in Galilee 2,000 years ago. Walker said that this is achieved through the Holy Spirit. This is possible because "Jesus was, and is alive." Walker said, "If they could meet Him then, we, too, can meet Him today."

Theologian Marcus Borg, speaking at a Jesus Seminar, said that the death and resurrection of Jesus open the way to leave behind our old lives, dominated by self and sin, and to walk into the new life of Christ. Borg links Jesus' command to take up the Cross and follow Him with this concept: As Christians follow Christ as disciples, they die to self and begin to find their new lives in Christ. To have new life, death must occur first: the death of self and rebirth to the new life of Christ.

When we celebrate the Resurrection on Easter Sunday, let us ponder these things. They may have a parallel in our nation's life. Certain things, certain bad practices, certain rotten institutions may have to be done away with, they may have to "die" for the nation to enjoy a rebirth and a new life.



Life beyond Tito and Jinggoy

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"RELAX. There's life beyond Tito Sotto, Jinggoy or Stanley Ho," a friend murmured, after hearing gripes over feeling suffocated by the election drivel.

But many have switched off. Dialogue withers if it doesn't budge beyond Fernando Poe's recycled movie one-liners, Dolphy's jokes and "Sex Bomb" dancers.

Debate on runaway foreign IOUs, for example, went down the drain, even before the campaign started. Candidates grope instead for opponents' "sexual preferences". Ask Ping Lacson or John Osmeña.

Would a Claro Recto or a Lorenzo Tañada dance the *otso-otso* on campaign *plataformas*? Today's candidates do. From Manong Ernie to Bong and Lito, they warble or sashay, silly grins creasing sweat-stained faces.

And there's overkill. Serial disqualification charges are lobbed, not for redress, but for smear fallout. A poster blitz has overrun walls, posts or trees. The President's prettified smile is omnipresent. So are pepsodent pearlies of Dick Gordon, Mar Roxas, et al.

A policy dialogue never took off, not from lack of trying by citizens. Businessmen submitted a "First 100 Days" action plan. The "Greens" and economists were equally forthcoming.

Critical choke points pinpointed included: red-inked budgets; ballooning debts, looming power shortages, crony-damaged banking systems, shoddy governance and obsolete political structures.

Mindanao's leaders cobbled a program for that criminally-neglected island. The Left offers dictatorship of the proletariat, stripped of old labels.

"Much of what is new and innovative is not initiated by governments," the late Indonesian scholar Soedjatmoko observed. "They come from 'movements from below'... from people, in expressions of their aspirations for a more decent, secure and equitable way of life."

Whoever will be elected inherits a government whose resources are stretched to snapping point. Official credibility is threadbare. A diminished sense of capacity will dog the "victors".

The new administration must reach out beyond government to "movements from below." Citizens will rally, if selfless leadership is shown.

The sizable crowds that turned up for preacher-turned-candidate Eddie Villanueva jolted many. Among that throng were those stunned by the re-appearance of discredited *trapo* faces: Juan Ponce, Kit, Dids what's-his-name? But were most of them, as the Good Book says, "people who seek Your face, Lord"?

Dr. Melba Padilla-Maggay of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture believes so. These are "committed men and women whose dormant energies are being roused," she writes.

"Their imagination (are) afire with the vision of a nation rising from the ashes. Along with other forces, it is mustering the will to turn the misfortunes of this country into something that resembles a future and a hope."

Most candidates, nonetheless, ladle out drivel, convinced that show biz bags the votes. Or is this merely opiate for problems metastasizing from neglect? When movie-stardust anesthesia wears off, old unresolved problems will re-emerge—with a vengeance.

Updates of the Sixth National Nutrition Survey found poor diets stunt one out of three among 9.31 million schoolchildren. Chronic hunger results in our kids being scrawnier, shorter—and frailer—than their Malaysian, Korean or Singaporean counterparts.

These issues will implode, but as full-blown crises, after the May 10 vote. That's when bills for this feckless campaign fall due. "Those who sow the wind, reap the whirlwind."

Philippine Institute for Development Studies president Mario Lamberte fears the crunch may erupt next year. Central Bank's Rafael Buenaventura estimates we have three years to hobble runaway deficits, piled up by crony-governance. Otherwise, an Argentina-style crisis will kick in.

At this stage of the campaign, the likely winner should have pulled ahead. That has not been the case. Instead, the President and "Da King" are sprinting neck and neck.

The opposition is bedeviled by campaign snafus and cash shortages. Contributors hedge their wagers, as prospect of a razor-thin victory emerges. The administration spends like there'll be no tomorrow.

There'll be no dawn and transition, if fraud or violence mar the vote. In this country, nobody concedes defeat. Losers depict themselves as cheated.

Will Magdalo type jackboots tromp in then? "How poor the country that must suffer gloriously triumphant generals," Jose de San Martin writes.

The scent of trouble hangs heavy in the air. Thus, the country's most senior prelate, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, urgently cautions respect for the vote's conduct and outcome. And it will be up to "committed men and women whose dormant energies are being roused" to ensure that.

At the House for Dying Destitutes' Chapel, the wife and I watched a Mother Teresa nun, in white and blue striped sari-habit, spread bougainvillas on a rough, unpainted coffin.

The homeless 72-year-old amputee, in it, had been cared for by the sisters until her last dying gasp. Yet, she'd not go to her paupers' grave alone. Accompanying nuns would pray over her clay what the Church invokes for presidents or beggars: that "angels and saints welcome you to paradise."

Mother Teresa of Calcutta once explained what this was all about : "In every act of love, you come face to face with God." That also means: there's life beyond Tito, Jinggoy and Stanley.

* * *

(E-mail : juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Inspire

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE REAL surprise in this campaign is Eddie Villanueva. I confess I thought he would swiftly end up as a "vanity candidate"—if you have vanity publications, you can have vanity candidates too—or someone who runs merely to indulge himself. I thought he would soon see the light after he realized he had little chance to win and go back to his previous calling, richer in experience, if poorer in money.

Well, he hasn't gone back to his previous calling, and that isn't either because he refuses to see the light. Rather than falling on the wayside, he seems to be storming ahead. If his sorties are anything to go by, he should soon go past Panfilo Lacson. And if his crowds continue to swell, who knows how far he'll go. He himself brims with confidence, coming from a belief, real or imagined, that he has a divine ally in all this. A belief, or sentiment, his followers share totally. Villanueva doesn't seem to be spending as much as his rivals, his followers are rooting for him from sheer conviction. You can see that in the faces of Kuh Ledesma and company. I don't know what the next surveys will say about his standing among the presidential candidates, but the other candidates would be foolish to take him lightly.

At the start, I thought he would just take votes away from Fernando Poe Jr. That is, *masa* votes, the *masa* being more prone to take comfort in someone who projects himself if not as a modern-day prophet, at least, as a conveyor of the divine will as much as in someone who proclaims himself to be a hero in real life as in the movies. Well, that probably remains the bulk of his following. But it is no longer confined to them. Villanueva has been getting good responses from the middle and well-off classes as well. I do know some of them. They've been trying to convince me to go their route too with the passion of converts.

While they haven't succeeded, I'm not knocking their convictions. I don't know Villanueva at all, but he comes across as an earnest fellow on TV. His religiousness or piety doesn't look contrived, or like a plaid suit that can be put on and off. He doesn't have a reputation for being crooked, which is more than can be said for many of the candidates. When he says he will not abide even friends and relatives who fail to hew the straight and narrow, he doesn't at all sound like Erap saying *walang kama-kamaganak, walang kaikaibigan*. Of course, at least from where I stand, it doesn't help either that he constantly responds to questions with Bible quotations and platitudes. Asked, for example, for his comments about the covenant he joined with the other presidential candidates condemning GMA's use of public funds to campaign, all he had to say was, "Honesty is the best policy." Maybe so, but not in campaigns. You need quite more than that.

None of this is to endorse Villanueva's candidacy. All of it is to note one very important thing about the current elections, which I think Villanueva's surge represents. And which is something the debate between EQ and IQ misses out completely. This is an election where the voters are looking not for someone who has a high EQ or IQ but for someone who has a high MQ, or morality quotient. This is an election where people are looking not for someone who can talk about politics and economics but for someone who can talk about hope and leading the country out of the wilderness. This is an election where people are looking not for someone who can perorate on issues or cradle babies in their arms but for someone who can light a candle in the darkness.

This is an election, in a word, where people are looking for someone who can inspire.

With reason. The most startling statistic I've heard of late is not just that the number of undecided is large but that it is growing. That is phenomenal. The norm has always been that the closer you get to Election Day, the less the number of undecided becomes, the voters already forming their minds about the candidate they want and committing themselves to him or her. This time, the closer we get to Election Day, the less we know whom to vote for. That statistic is borne out by what friends are telling me: They'll know who to go for only on Election Day.

I attribute that to the fact that none of the stronger candidates has been able to inspire the voters. The closest to have done that, by virtue of his religious convictions and the Filipino's proneness to look up to heaven when all else seems to fail, is Villanueva. He's the one who doesn't seem to suffer from the "wasted vote" syndrome, or his followers being afraid to vote for him because their votes would be wasted. "*Maniwala ka*" is their campaign line. It is a powerful one in a world where people have lost faith things can be better.

The fundamental problem of this country today, as palpable as the bass line of a jazz standard, is not political or economic, however arguably humongous the problems there are. It is moral. It is the one symbolized by Elmer Jacinto topping the medical board exams and wanting to leave this country to become a caregiver in America. This is a country that has lost its bearings, not knowing where it has come from and not knowing where it is going. This is a country that has lost its pride, the corruption that assails it not just being one of the body but of the soul, a sense of things decaying and rotting and one being powerless to do anything about it. This is a country that has lost its faith and hope, the lack of conviction and despair suffusing it like the vapors of alcohol in the dead of night, or morning.

It's not just enough to make promises or look *pogi* in posters or take to the rostrum and talk about an economic platform. You want to be president in these circumstances:

Inspire.

FVR and Miriam in reconciliation kiss

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's 57th birthday celebration in her father's hometown of Lubao, Pampanga, had a festive and unmistakably upbeat air, doubtless influenced by the recent SWS survey showing her neck and neck with FPJ. The patio of the San Agustin Church and nearby streets were decorated with K-4 buntings and a local band played Happy Birthday. Former Presidents Ramos and Aquino led the bevy of greeters who drove from Manila to join the Macapagal family, local politicians and supporters at the mass and breakfast afterwards.

The big crowd of well-wishers included K-4 senatorial candidates such as Pampanga's Gov. Lito Lapid, ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin, Richard Gordon and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, as well as members of the Cabinet led by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and many politicians from the Central Luzon region led by the various Pampango politicians such as K-4 Rep. Oscar Rodriguez, now vying with former Immigration Chief Andrea Domingo, running under Lakas-Kampi, for the mayoralty of San Fernando; Lakas Rep. Zeny Ducut, now running for governor against NPC Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc in a three-cornered fight. The crowd of greeters also included Tarlac Gov. Apeng Yap, Bulacan Representatives Reylina Nicolas and Wilfredo Villarama, Rep. Antonino Roman and Gov. Ding Roman of Bataan and Subic Chief Felicito Payumo. Also very visible were the many ladies supporting GMA from the "Kagabay ni Glo," a parallel women's group organized by some well-heeled ladies.

On the front pew, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo looked every bit like a shy groom as he waited for his wife with a bouquet of red roses in hand.

* * *

GMA came to Lubao with little sleep. The night before, she attended the Palm Sunday celebration of the El Shaddai in Parañaque. Before a crowd of 600,000 people, Brother Mike Velarde led the singing of Happy Birthday for GMA, prompting speculation that the big religious bloc could be going for her. On the other hand, very early yesterday morning, GMA was greeted by the Iglesia ni Cristo radio station DZEC and Net 25, which followed it with a phone interview. Later that morning GMA again was interviewed, by the INC Network, this time live by veteran commentator Totoy Talastas, an avid Marcos and Erap supporter who used to be quite critical of her. Yesterday, however, Talastas was quite hospitable to the birthday girl, allowing her to lengthily explain her policy of "personal compassion" toward former President Estrada even as the wheels of justice are turning in the court, and why she reneged on her promise not to run. To media watchers, these developments fuel speculations that INC may be leaning toward GMA.

In a tight race between GMA and FPJ, command votes such as those of El Shaddai and INC would matter very much for the candidates.

* * *

While waiting for GMA, Speaker Jose de Venecia got FVR up from his seat in the front pew and led him to K-4 senatorial candidate Miriam Defensor Santiago for a long-overdue reconciliation. FVR greeted his former fiercest rival as "my *kasimanwa*," and the two then kissed cheek to cheek. Not content with that, JDV led them to seal their reconciliation "kiss" in front of the cameras. Later, FVR mused that Miriam, his wife Ming Ramos and his former public works secretary, Gregorio Vigilar, are all "*kasimanwa*" from La Paz, Iloilo. JDV didn't understand the phrase and FVR explained, "*kasi panggalatok yang si* Joe." JDV, the indefatigable peacemaker, told me that at the El Shaddai meeting, he talked to Sen. John Osmeña about his problem with FVR and the Cebu senator said it was no longer an issue.

* * *

While waiting for GMA, the topic was the latest SWS survey. FVR opined that at some point the ratings curves intersect, after which one candidate's curve goes down while the other one climbs up. "That's what happened to me when I won my boss' backing," said FVR, referring to President Aquino's endorsement of him. Aquino then noted that FVR was in a tie with rival Eduardo Cojuangco in the latter's home province of Tarlac, "which was quite a feat" and how she personally campaigned in Ninoy's hometown of Concepcion, which Ramos carried. FVR didn't seem to have realized that.

* * *

"Kagabay ni Glo" is actually a merger of two women's organizations actively campaigning for GMA: the multisectoral group "Kababaihan para kay Gloria," which was started by civil society stalwarts Mely Nicolas and Evelyn Kilayco; and the "Gloria Ladies Organization" which was organized by equally dynamic and determined ladies from Forbes Park, Valle Verde, Bel-Air, led by Conchitina Bernardo, wife of RP Ambassador to Madrid Lani Bernardo, GMA *balae* Charito Montenegro, Menchu Geronimo, Nene Hilado and Frannie Jacinto, RJ's better half. But Kagabay ni Glo is not just all about ladies from the so-called perfumed crowd, for membership crosses the various social classes. Thus, Payatas women sit side by side with Ayala Alabang ladies at strategy meetings and they campaign together.

* * *

Kagabay ladies stressed that they presented their 12-point Agenda for Filipino Women 2004 to 2010 last March 8 to GMA, and accepting it in principle, the President stressed how she is already implementing some of those points. One is the fact that she has appointed eleven women to her Cabinet, the highest number of women so far appointed in any presidency, and in positions traditionally held by men, such as foreign affairs, labor, finance, justice, poverty alleviation, budget, peace, environment, and science and technology. According to the Kagabay ladies, GMA also stressed that she reached her target of one million women-beneficiaries of micro-finance last year, six months earlier than she promised in her first State of the Nation address. (*To be continued*)

A women's agenda for GMA

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"A MAKE or break election" is how Conchitina Sevilla Bernardo, former Makati Vice-Mayor and now wife of the Philippine ambassador to Spain, assesses May's electoral exercise.

That is why, sometime last month, Conchitina left Ambassador Lani Bernardo to man the fort by his lonesome in Madrid and flew here to help organize women for the campaign of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. She joined women leaders like Imelda Nicolas, Evelyn Kilayko and Charito Montenegro, mother-in-law of the President's son Mikey, as convenors of "Kagabay ni Glo," the combined force of two women's organizations, GLO or Gloria's Ladies Organization, and Kagabay or "Kababaihan para kay Gloria at sa Bayan (Women for Gloria and the Nation)."

GLO is made up mainly of women from the privileged class, engaged mainly in raising funds for the President's campaign. Kagabay, on the other hand, organizes grassroots women in urban poor neighborhoods and rural communities. "The synergy of our efforts and resources is wonderful!" exclaims Conchitina, recounting how the GLO women have been joining campaign sorties around Metro Manila and the provinces, seeing for themselves how, in a manner of speaking, "the other half lives."

And how are the *masa* women receiving them? Evelyn Kilayko, who resigned from the non-partisan Concerned Women of the Philippines to join the campaign, says the women she has encountered "appreciate the President's efforts," especially her presence at the sites of disasters that have befallen their communities. "Before FPJ announced his candidacy," says Kilayko, "the President was in fact rating high among the C-D-E classes.

True, many among the poor are mesmerized by Fernando Poe Jr.'s movie personality, but that is why we have to work even more intensely in these communities, to explain to voters there the consequences of a Poe presidency."

* * *

CONTRARY to conventional perceptions that the *masa* do not cotton to the President, perceiving her as cold and unfeeling, Bernardo, Kilayko and other "Kagabay ni Glo" leaders attest to the "warmth" with which ordinary folk have welcomed the President. "When she visits urban poor communities," says Kilayko, "they rush to her and embrace and kiss her." Not to be forgotten, they say, is the visit to Payatas, where the residents, among the poorest of the poor in the metro area, gushed that GMA "is the only President who has ever visited us here."

The women are dead serious about their efforts, believing the outcome of the campaign will determine no less than the future of the country. "A vote for any candidate other than the President is effectively a vote for Poe," is how Kilayko puts it.

* * *

TO UNITE women behind the GMA campaign, "Kagabay ni GLO" members drafted a "12-Point Agenda for Women" late last year which was approved last January.

You judge if, based on this agenda, Filipino women's lives will improve any during another six years of President Arroyo. Here are excerpts from the Agenda:

1. Support the strict implementation of the Anti-Rape Law, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, and the Anti-Domestic Violence Act.

2. Strengthen the government machinery for gender and development (GAD) by urgent action on the bill that seeks to upgrade the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women to Cabinet level; enforce the strict implementation of the minimum five percent GAD budget in the General Appropriations Act in the national and local government; work for the full implementation of women representation in the local legislative bodies as provided by the Local Government Code.

3. Ensure greater and more significant role of women's participation in government, in the executive and legislative branches, in appointive and elective positions.

4. Protect the rights of women OFWs by amending the Migrant Workers' Act (RA 8042), instituting reintegration programs and adequate on-site services for them.

5. Promote responsible parenthood by ensuring that parents make well-informed decisions in terms of family planning methods, women's and children's health, and the economic and environmental impact on the family and the country.

6. Protect indigenous and Muslim women by upholding their rights to their ancestral domain and to self-determination by amending the Mining Act and the Indigenous People's Rights Act.

* * *

7. ESTABLISH educational programs that foster a culture of peace and justice, stress tolerance and unity in diversity and equality in gender relationships; implement the Comprehensive Mindanao Education Program which includes the Madrassah education; establish scholarships for Muslim and indigenous women; accelerate the literacy of Muslim and indigenous women; revise Department of Education and CHED approved textbooks especially in History to reflect the contribution of Muslim and indigenous people and women in nation-building.

8. Protect women in armed conflict situations; find immediate solutions to the needs of these women and their families; pursue peace efforts with greater participation of women in negotiations and conflict resolution.

9. Promote economic self-sufficiency through micro-finance or lending to poor women using principles proven successful in terms of repayment of loans, savings mobilization, attitude change and borrowing habits.

10. Adopt a pro-people land use and sea use maritime policy and the provision of land and fishing rights for women farmers and fishers, respectively.

11. Support bills that protect the environment through energy and water preservation and management and proper waste management.

12. Intensify the campaign against illegal drugs which have devastated the lives of countless young women and men and their families.

By the waters of Bai . . .

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THE DARING Gat-Maitan died after he was hit by a cannon ball on the chest. On the third and final assault on Cainta, 30 Spanish soldiers died while many others were injured. Of its 1,000 inhabitants, only 600 survived, among them, the wounded, the old, women and children. After his victory, Salcedo had the turrets burnt along with the fortifications.

From there he proceeded to Taytay. Like the Cainteños, the residents of Taytay tried to resist the Spaniards, many of them dying heroically while defending their town. Not wanting to lose more men, Salcedo sued for honorable peace that would be acceptable to Maguinoo Molho de Taytay. He proposed the demolition of the the turrets of the town while the people will be allowed to keep their weapons.

Maguinoo Molho, the elders of the town and the chiefs of the surrounding settlements accepted the proposal, thus allowing Salcedo to leave for Manila to give an account to his uncle, the Adelantado Legaspi who forthwith sent him to finish the conquest of the other towns along Laguna de Bai.

Accompanied by Fr. Alvarado, he arrived in Laguna in a galley with 12 *caracoas*, and took off for Bai, the principal town, with the intention of pacifying it, thinking that if the *principales* of the town accepted the peace it would be easy for the chiefs of neighboring settlements to do likewise.

Contrary to his expectations, the heroic sons of Bai refused his offer of peace and went forth to meet him disposed to defend their land with their lives. They declared that he could take Bai only over their dead bodies and the rubble of their town. Salcedo, upon sensing their resolve and guided by prudence, retreated. Besides he had been ordered by his uncle, the Adelantado, to employ all means of persuasion before resorting to combat; that he was not to use force unless in extreme cases. "His Majesty, the Catholic King," Legaspi had told him, "does not want burnt villages, or deserted, barren plains but populated islands."

Salcedo and his troops retired to a barrio (near Pila) that had been burnt by the natives, establishing a temporary garrison there. Then he sent Fr. Alvarado to Manila to ask for provisions and more Visayan allies. A Spanish soldier who spoke Tagalog was sent to Bai to negotiate for peace.

That afternoon the messenger returned frustrated. He narrated that at first the Tagalog warriors welcomed him affectionately and with hospitality, inspiring vibrant hopes of peace. But as soon as they heard the proposals of submission and vassalage to the Spanish king and Salcedo's resolution to take Bai with blood and fire in the event they refused, they shot their arrows into the air and threw lances shouting, "May the crocodiles of this Laguna fall over and devour us before we recognize a foreign king!"

Salcedo, when he heard this wanted to attack Bai immediately but his lieutenants held back his impetuousness, counseling him to wait for reinforcements. Prudence prevailed when the intrepid Salcedo, recognizing he was outnumbered and the seeing rash valor of his enemies, decided to wait. Two days later, 500 Visayans and Manila lancers arrived. With the reinforcements, he attacked Bai, whose defenders had been joined by the other warriors and chiefs of nearby towns.

The Malay warriors were led by the valiant Gat-Dula. Waving a red cloth as though it were a flag, and standing over the first trench, he encouraged the heroic patriots to fearlessly attack the Spaniards who resorted to guerrilla warfare, advancing towards the trenches of the town.

The battle was bloody and difficult and lasted for nearly five hours. Salcedo, sensing uncertain victory and taking into account his casualties, retreated to Pila with his troops in an orderly manner. The defenders decided to die for the defense of their town, suffering tremendous number of wounded and dead.

In Pila, Salcedo assessed his losses, and it was agreed to send messengers of peace to Gat-Dula. The following day, Fr. Alvarado and a soldier left the camp and were well received. The priest explained the futility of resistance against cannon fire and the great help they would receive from the powerful Spanish monarch against the Moros, the mountain tribes and other enemies if they would recognize Spanish authority and sovereignty. He also promised to respect their liberty, customs and traditions and allow them the use of their arms.

Gat-Dula submitted these proposals to the Council of Elders and Maguinoes, who resolved after much discussions to accept them since the other chiefs and councilors of the rest of the area allied with Bai had approved them. Salcedo celebrated the decision with joy, deeming it a triumph that ensure his conquest of the towns of Central Luzon.

He then went on to conquer those in the mountain areas. But when the villagers there, rebellious to all domination and used to freedom and independence, saw the approaching Spanish forces, they picked up their belongings, took off for impenetrable areas and unreachable spots in the mountains into which no stranger could follow on foot. As they fled, they torched everything they could not carry, including their dwellings and farms. Finding only smoldering embers and barren plains Salcedo decided to abandon the project.

(*Pedro Paterno, Vol. II, HISTORIA DE FILIPINAS*)

Proud Filipino

YOUNG BLOOD

James Michael L. Payumo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT'S been three years since I came back to my native land. Despite the many experiences and memories I've picked up here, each day still manages to bring new insights. Last month, I attended the Ash Wednesday mass at the Edsa Shrine. During the bishop's homily, he emphasized the need for prayer, sacrifice and sharing during Lenten season, and the role that these virtues played during the first Edsa revolution. He said that with prayer, sacrifice and sharing, Filipinos were able to come together as a united people and overthrow the Marcos regime. It was at this point in the homily that I looked at the faces around me, and realized that quite a number, especially among the elderly, were wiping off tears from their eyes.

I found myself responding to their tears and the bishop's inspiring words. It kindled in me a sense of pride, knowing that I was inside a historic landmark of democracy, in the company of people who took part in the world's first bloodless revolution. I was overwhelmed by the thought that Edsa I was fueled by unity sprung from a nation's spirituality, hope, perseverance, and a shared desire for a better future.

It was with such sense of pride that my thoughts drifted to the present state of the Philippines. After the mass, I went home wondering what the future holds for the nation given the current political and economic turmoil, and the controversies surrounding the approaching local and national elections. It was the first time since living here that I actually took time to seriously ponder the plight of my fellow Filipinos.

Being a naturalized American, I assumed that my thoughts on Philippine political, social and economic issues, were irrelevant, short as I am of information to form an educated opinion; besides I am not a qualified voter. Despite having participated in the second Edsa revolution, I felt that Erap's downfall or what may occur in the upcoming months would have little effect on how I live my life while studying in the Philippines. Who am I, an American *balikbayan* studying medicine, to voice my thoughts on Filipino concerns?

My experience that Ash Wednesday made me realize that regardless of my citizenship, my natural love of this country and its people is stronger than I had ever thought. I may not be a Filipino citizen, but I feel I have lived here long enough to question the politics as practiced today in our nation. I am a natural Filipino and it is from this perspective that I doubt, among many things, the qualifications and competency of certain presidential candidates. Having witnessed the overthrow of former President Estrada and the chaos his regime and its fall created, what is to become of our country should another prominent actor or television personality take the reins of government? Popularity alone does not guarantee competence in dealing with wide-reaching issues and policies, nor does it guarantee the fulfillment of overused promises to the masses. What will it take poor Filipinos to realize that a written script brought to life by a director does not automatically translate into happy endings in the real world? If there are answers to these questions, then perhaps only the future or the current candidates can provide.

With millions of other Filipinos, I am now both cautious and dreadful of what the coming elections could bring. Along with thousands of Filipinos, young and old, I pity this country each time the peso sinks yet again in value and self-serving politicians play to the masses, all the while preparing to line their already full pockets. In the time I have lived here, I have shaken my head at the useless waste, the wanton pollution, and the unrelenting corruption rampant throughout the country. I have wondered at the senseless but preventable belittling of the nation's natural beauty and resources. I have rued, along with many others, at the continued exploitation of the Filipino worker and the sight of poverty all around.

Still, in the face of all these troubles, there is an inherent gift, a spark in all Filipinos that I have come to know, see and respect. This gift offers hope for our troubled nation. It is the gift of vitality and resilience, as well as the virtues of prayer, sacrifice and sharing that saved the nation from bloodshed and war in Edsa I and II. I do not doubt that these qualities will continue to carry the Filipino people through in any trying situation, even beyond the coming election.

To this day, I am still awed at how Filipinos can laugh, love and enjoy the pleasures of family and home in the worst of circumstances that could have broken even the strongest of human spirits. I am humbled each time I witness this Filipino spirit, and grateful that I come from a race that appreciates the true meaning of life and keeps faith in a future in the midst of storms.

After three years of living here, I now appreciate my own parents' longing to return to the homeland they have left behind. After three years of living here, I may not know everything about my native land, but I can now say I am acculturated enough to feel proud of my Filipino countrymen, sorrow for our nation's troubles and joy in the knowledge that there is always tomorrow. Filipinos have endured in the past; they will endure now; and they will continue to endure into the future.

James Michael L. Payumo, 25, is a a third year medical student at the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. He graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a Bachelor of Arts degree in European History (Honors) and a Bachelor of Science in Biology.

THEY SAID

His way

"He wants to go his own way, so let it be that way."

—Re-electionist Sen. John Osmeña on the refusal of his son, Cebu Vice Governor John Gregory Osmeña, to follow his advise to withdraw from the gubernatorial race. Osmeña Jr. is now facing allegations linking him to a seized drug shipment.

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Pork barrel wrapped in...

THE COUNTRYSIDE Development Fund (pork barrel) of our congressmen and senators is the root of all evil or the mother of corruption.

I suggest that instead of the Department of Budget and Management handling this fund, it should be deposited with government banks, like DBP and Land Bank of the Philippines, where it could be kept safer and earn interest. At present, it appears that the fund is treated like a personal account of the congressmen and senators. We do not know how the money is being used. We do not know if there is proper accounting of this fund. Unrealistic projects are funded, wrapped in mystery, not according to the actual needs of the people. Somebody said, profuse bleeding starts with—the DBM, down to the congressmen, senators, contractors and other government officials.

With the government banks, the disbursement of the fund will have to follow bank procedures and corruption will be minimized.

—GUILLERMO M. ALONSO,
Poblacion Asturias, Cebu

Toll fee breakdown by kilometer

WE wish to correct the wrong information that your Conrado R. Banal III wrote in his column Breaktime (PDI, 3/9/04) about the Skyway System and the toll rates.

Pursuant to the Supplemental Toll Operation Agreement between the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) representing the government, Philippine National Construction Corp. (as Operator) and Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp. (as Investor), the toll collection for the 9.5-kilometer (not 6 km) elevated section of the Skyway System from Bicutan to Buendia and the 6.5-km Magallanes-Bicutan at-grade follows an open system, while toll collection for the remaining 7-km at-grade level from Bicutan to Alabang is on per-kilometer basis.

At present, and assuming that the tolls at both levels of the Skyway System are collected on a per kilometer basis, the toll rate for 9.5-km elevated level at P75 is only about P7.89/km and not P12.50/km. For the 13.5-km at-grade, which is P42 from Magallanes to Alabang, it is only P3.11/km and not P3.20/km.

It is bad enough that Banal didn't check his information and unjustly bloated the toll rate figures to push a similar tollway project, he also unnecessarily slammed and gave the Skyway System bad press. By the way, both the Skyway system and the rehabilitated North Luzon Tollway (and the other tollway facilities, for that matter) are being regulated and supervised by the TRB, which fixes the toll rates and approves and monitors the operation, maintenance, the new construction, repair and rehabilitation of all tollway facilities.

—ROMERICO O. REGANIT,
general manager,
PNCC Skyway Corp.,
Doña Soledad Avenue,
Better Living,
Parañaque City

Political vandals

I AM with Mr. De Quiros in his painful and emotional dissertation of present-day Philippine politics and governance. I would like to add this observation: the present crop of politicians and those entering the field of politics are vandals. They are vandalizing the art of politics. Examples are rampant graft and corruption, dishonesty, unprincipled political turncoatism, political family dynasty, etc. Cerm it political vandalism.

President Quezon's statement that he would rather see the country run like hell was a wish that has visited us. This very well runs counter to Rizal's statement that the youth are the hope of the fatherland.

The Cory Constitution has transformed our country's democracy into one: "poor the pipol, buy the pipol, and (after elections) sell the pipol."

—LARRY PAWID,
La Trinidad, Benguet

VAL HANDUMON

Statesmen and economists

IT is being claimed that economists are better economic managers for a country because of their academic training. No notion is more foolish.

Historical experience teaches us that nations have become successful economically through the governance of statesmen and pragmatic politicians and not by economists. Witness Malaysia under physician Dr. Mohammad Mahathir, Singapore under labor lawyer Lee Kuan Yew, South Korea under politician Syngman Rhee and the generals, China under college dropout Deng Xiao Peng, Taiwan under military dictator Chiang Kai-Shek and his son. Also witness the United States under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, lawyer and politician, who saved America from the Depression, and the samurai bureaucrats of the Meiji Restoration in Japan. All of them discarded the academic and zany theories of the academically-trained economists and saved their countries from poverty.

In the '50s under President Magsaysay, the guerrilla-politician, and Carlos Garcia, lawyer-politician, the Philippines attained the second highest economic growth in Asia. When Diosdado Macapagal, lawyer and trained in economics by the University of Sto. Tomas, became the president, our economy started its steep decline which continues up to the present. Macapagal started the first devaluation of the peso from a ratio of two to one dollar to four to one, and floated the exchange rate, on the advice of International Monetary Fund, United States and local economic technocrats. Now it's 56 to the dollar under Macapagal's daughter, Gloria, and we have become the second poorest nation in Asia.

Economics is not an exact science. It is called the "dismal science." Under our economist-technocrats, it has become even more dismal and crazy. That's because our economists are bookish and are agents of foreign interests. But their pretensions to wisdom are bigger than Mt. Pinatubo. FPJ is making a mistake in seeking and accepting the advice of our economists who do not have minds of their own.

—MANUEL F. ALMARIO
mfalmario@yahoo.com

Reliability of poll surveys

THE QUESTION of reliability of poll surveys has often been asked but has remained unanswered. Let me attempt to dispel prevailing misconceptions, unfounded assumptions and the partisan bias of not a few among us, the voting public.

At the heart of a survey is its sample population. A good sample is supposed to represent faithfully the population from which it is drawn. As such, it must be, first of all, a truly random sample.

Randomness means that every member of the sampling population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. That is, the researcher cannot select at will the respondents of his or her own choice.

If the above requirement is not met, a set of respondents does not constitute a random sample. In that case, estimates of population values derived from such non-random samples may hardly be taken as reliable.

In theory, the bigger the sample size relative to the sampling population size, the more reliable is the sample value as an estimate of the corresponding population value. Then, it is more likely that the sample is a faithful representation of the population from which it is drawn.

On the other hand, if the sample is relatively small, it is quite probable that it may turn out to be a misrepresentation of the population it is supposed to exemplify.

On the condition that the sample is truly random, the reliability of an estimate may be expressed percentage-wise as the margin of allowable error of the estimate relative to the true value. Thus, the greater the margin of error, the less reliable is the estimate. The population size and the possible sample size together may help the researcher decide what the margin of error should be, prior to the actual survey. Giving just the number of respondents but omitting the size of the sampling population does not bespeak professionalism in the presentation of statistical information.

Hence, poll survey tables comparing percentages of respondents favoring certain candidates, without presenting figures for both population and sample sizes, do not give sufficient information to provide the database for a more reliable prediction of the outcome of elections. Assuming, of course, that the so-called "imponderables" (such as vote-buying, cheating or ballot tampering, and terrorism) do not come in at closing time to prostitute the people's will.

—PANFILO J. ROSAURO, PhD
Misamis University
Ozamiz City

Work on Metro bridges resumed

THIS has reference to the news item "Solon seeks probe of Kalinga bridge collapse." (PDI, 3/13/04)

The story mentioned that three major bridges in Metro Manila, namely, La Huerta Bridge in Parañaque, Sevilla Bridge in Mandaluyong City and Tullahan Bridge in Valenzuela City are among the alleged 50 bridges being rushed to meet the summer completion deadline.

According to Director Gil Villanueva of the DPWH-Asian Development Bank-Project Management Office (ADB-PMO), the subject ADB-assisted bridges were constructed some 50 to 60 years ago and are being reconstructed to ensure public safety due to much heavier loads and to increase their capability of resisting a major earthquake.

Reconstruction of La Huerta and Sevilla Bridges was started in January 2003 and targeted to be completed in April 2004 but these projects were suspended for a period of six months due to the conduct of underwater verification as part of then Secretary Bayani Fernando's idea of maximizing the utilization of bridges' substructure component to realize budget savings. Because of this, redesigning of the substructure or bridge foundations done for the three bridges took quite a while.

The DPWH has now started to work round the clock without sacrificing quality to meet the revised completion target date for La Huerta and Sevilla Bridges which is May 2004 and July 2004, respectively. On the other hand, another cause of delay at Tullahan Bridge is the MMDA wants a detour bridge built before work on the Tullahan bridge is begun to avoid traffic congestion at the bridge site. The detour bridge is being installed now prior to the closure for reconstruction of Tullahan Bridge.

—JENNIFER D. PUNZALAN,
officer in charge,
Public Information Division,
Department of Public Works
and Highways, Manila

The Church among the poor

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

A GROUP of 20 urban poor leaders recently met with Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales to ask for his help in persuading government to limit demolitions and provide land security, slum upgrading, jobs and health resources. They also asked if the poor and the Church could be partners in development work.

The archbishop said he would do what they asked. "In the past," he said, "the Church worked for the poor. Now it will work with the poor."

There is a long history behind the urban poor-Church relationship. In Tondo in the 1970s when Zoto (Zone 1 Tondo) led the first systematic involvement of the poor in their development, the Church played a major role. Half of the community organizers were priests, sisters and ministers. The parishes cooperated. Good Shepherd Sisters lived in the area. They led Bible reflections with the people and went with them on their marches.

The same thing happened in the 1980s in the National Government Center of Quezon City with the Sama-Sama people's organization, which grew out of a Basic Christian Community program. Priests were deeply involved. The people struggled for the land and eventually President Cory Aquino gave them the land. This was typical of many other Church-poor joint undertakings from 1970 to the end of martial law.

The same poor-Church bond underlies the growth of the Workers Party in Brazil that brought Lula to the presidency. However, here in the Philippines, such Church presence in urban poor areas is missing for the most part.

There is only one group in Metro Manila that really needs the Church—the urban poor. They are also the only group completely open to the Gospel, because, as the Latin American theologians are fond of saying, "The Gospel is good news for the poor".

I saw this last week at a mass celebrated by Fr. Robert Reyes in Baseco. When the mass began, a silence that the area may have probably never known before settled on all of the 200 or so people present. The people were waiting to hear what God had to say to them. They wouldn't question His word or rationalize it away. They might not be able to carry out all that the Gospel might demand, but they would be thoroughly honest about their weaknesses.

And yet the Church has neglected the poor. It is common for people writing about slums to point out that in the cities of the developing world, 50 percent and 60 percent of the population are slum dwellers, but they occupy only 5 percent of the residential land. Something similar can be said of the Church. Some 5 percent of its time (the time of its priests and sisters) is given to the poor, while 95 percent is given to the well-off in private schools, hospitals and in rich and middle-income parishes. In parishes where there are rich and poor, most priests spend the bulk of their time with the rich. This is not meant to blame anyone.

The well-off don't really need the Church. If there were no Church-run schools and hospitals, they would find alternatives. The poor need the Church because in today's Philippines there is no other source of moral, inspirational and political strength that could help them win a better life.

Rich and poor need the Church's message and sacraments, but only the poor need its all out help in life's struggle.

When we arrived for the mass in Baseco there were only a few people ready. The women stopped a drinking session of their men who acceded without a word of complaint. One of the drinkers kept asking, "What is this *pulong* for?" Time and again the women told him, "The mass, the priest will say mass". Each time he nodded approvingly. One woman showed Fr. Reyes her little daughter who had two boils on her head that, God forgive me, looked like horns. The child was thin in an old dress with the listless look of sick and hungry children. Later that night, at the wake of a relative of my wife, a little girl of the same age in a beautiful dress came to me for the age-old *mano po* blessing. I kissed her on the cheek. She laughed and wiggled in my arms, smelling of chocolate.

In Baseco that morning, I saw a woman swept manure under a house with her foot. A woman who looked liked she was from the Cordillera stood barefoot in the mud, pregnant and with a little girl pulling at her skirt. Half of the women carried babies.

The children are the only beauty in their lives.

Fr. Reyes told them they must unite and work to improve their lives and not depend on politicians. They should not let themselves be divided into factions, as that is the way the politicians control them. Don't count on good luck either, he said, trust in yourselves and God.

The mass was held in a clearing amid a ring of shanties that were spared by fire which days before had gutted the homes of quite a number of their neighbors.

Fr. Reyes told the people Jesus was not a candidate. But he does not leave after the elections. Nor does he make promises he doesn't keep. At the kiss of peace, the people seemed exhilarated as they went around shaking each other's hands and hugging one another. It was a very happy moment. One old woman went from one person to another tirelessly until she had greeted everyone.

Ideological groups, past governments, NGOs and the elite have failed the poor. The Church, too has failed, but it has the Gospel message that tells the poor things can change. The Gospel alone reaches into the heart of the poor to inspire and create dignity. Only religion can touch the heart of the poor, Gandhi said. The poor also need the resources of the Church, especially its power to influence government and the elite, and to call the elite to the service of the poor.

Archbishop Rosales told the people he would endorse their requests to Malacañang. He said the archdiocese was planning a new program that would operate not only for the poor but with the poor. The people were delighted.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates

Meralco's insolence

I READ with gusto the column of retired Supreme Court Justice Isagani A. Cruz (PDI, 3/7/4) which delved into the insolence of Meralco. I also agree that "there are similar incidents that have caused much indignation among mostly ignorant persons who do not know their rights under the law." But this issue of disconnection is just one of the many concrete expressions of Meralco's insolence.

We just have to be reminded of Meralco's Independent Power Producer (First Gas Power Corp.) which charges the highest cost of electricity (P4.21/kWh) among all the IPPs. That's why our average generation charge under our Meralco bill (P3.40 down to P3.18/kWh) is still higher than that of Visayan Electric Co. (Veco) (P2.67/kWh), San Fernando (P2.49/kWh) or Dagupan Electric Corp. (P2.48/kWh).

Meralco's insolence can be seen best in its stubborn persistence, driven by corporate greed, in buying from its own IPPs, whose electricity costs are a lot higher than those of Napocor. This deprives Meralco customers of the enjoyment of both the full P0.30/kWh Mandated Rate Reduction under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act and the P2.38/kWh cheap cost of NPC power.

Another instance of insolence is Meralco's petition to reduce the interest on Customer Deposit from 10 percent under ERC Resolution 95-21 and 6 percent under Meralco's Terms and Conditions to 3-1 percent. These deposits are meant as guarantee for future payments from delinquent customers. If these deposits are to answer for unpaid electricity bills, then there should be no disconnection at all unless the billing for the following month is not settled and the deposit replenished. Without even informing individual customers of the years of interest, Meralco readily makes them victims of disconnections.

The latest insolence was revealed during the initial consultation on the proposed Magna Carta for Electricity Consumers. From among the numerous consumer concerns raised, the meter deposit of the Meralco customers, which is equivalent to half the cost of the meter, was discovered to have already been recovered by Meralco under the Return on Rate Base formula. This prompted the ERC to look for ways to remove this charge and to have this deposit, including the interest thereon, refunded to the customers.

I can cite other Meralco acts of insolence but we believe we can overcome these if the Meralco residential customers will find time to participate in the ERC hearings on the Magna Carta for Electricity Consumers scheduled at 9 a.m. and on the Customer Deposits at 2 p.m., both on April 27, 2004. So far, Nasecore has reached out to more than 1,000 homeowners associations, encouraging them to attend these hearings. We hope Justice Cruz can join us in these hearings.

—PETE L. ILAGAN,
president,
National Association of Electricity
Consmuers for Reforms,
Unit 616 Roxas Seafront Gardens,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

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Anti-communist leader gunned down

LEGAZPI CITY—Lawyer Ricardo Nepomuceno, chair of the Kusog Kontra Komunismo (KKK), an organization that has been openly denouncing the New People's Army (NPA) and its atrocities, and two of his security guards were gunned down a few meters from his house in Barangay Iraya Norte, Oas, Albay, at about 8:20 a.m. yesterday by at least 10 suspected NPA members.

Col. Bienvenido Reyes, commanding officer of the 22nd Infantry Battalion based in Barangay Tula-Tula, Ligao City, identified the two slain close-in security men of Nepomuceno as Sgt. Panfilo Velocura and Pvt. Richard Llupar.

Araceli Nepomuceno, wife of the slain anti-communist leader, said her husband was on his way to the Regional Trial Court of Ligao City for a case hearing when waylaid by the suspects.

The KKK leader was the lawyer of the relatives of the victims of NPA killings in Albay.

Witnesses said the suspects were wearing masks when they blocked the way of Nepomuceno's car after it slowed down at a street corner, some 150 meters from the police station, and shot at its three occupants using Armalite rifles.

Masked men

Col. Ramon Santos, 901st Infantry Brigade commander, said the suspects were on board a blue van and a motorcycle with no plates.

The victims suffered multiple gunshot wounds.

"The death of Nepomuceno is a big loss on the part of the military and to the Bicolanos as well," the brigade commander said.

He said Nepomuceno was the only person he had met who had the guts to denounce the NPA in the Bicol region.

Nepomuceno earlier revealed to media men that there had already been 25 attempts on his life.

Death threats

He also claimed prior to his death that he had been receiving death threats.

Nepomuceno had openly said that in its 35 years of existence, the NPA has done nothing good for the people, citing the bombings of telecommunication facilities and the raid on the National Power Corp. plant in Calaca, Batangas.

Nepomuceno also described NPA rebels as great liars.

He said what the communist rebels are doing against innocent people of the community are contrary to the claims of communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal that the NPA is for the people.

He added that collecting revolutionary taxes from businessmen and lowly people is enough evidence that the guerrillas are not contributing to the development of the country.

To show that the slain Nepomuceno is loved by Bicolanos, the Muslim sector and members of the different non-government organizations in Albay will conduct two separate indignation rallies in Oas town and in Peñaranda Freedom Park in Legazpi City. *Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Exec denies 'midnight' land titles

BONTOC, Mt. Province—Former National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Chair David Daoas denied the allegations of ancestral land claimants and former NCIP officials that he signed spurious ancestral land titles before he left office in 2001.

Daoas, who is running for representative of Mt. Province, said the documents that he signed during his term as NCIP chair were legitimate and not "midnight titles" as claimed by some NCIP officials.

Daoas, a lawyer, claimed the reports on the supposedly irregular land titles were meant to stop him from pursuing his candidacy.

He clarified that the documents he signed were not titles but reference documents that claimants could use in processing land titles.

"We signed these documents. But the problem here is (the claimants) did not 'understand that these should be processed by the Registry of Deeds. These are not yet titles," he said.

He said the documents are references for the land claims of indigenous peoples.

Former NCIP Chair Reuben Lingating, in earlier reports, said most of 600 "midnight titles" were processed despite the absence of technical maps, anthropological backgrounds or historical support.

None of these titles, however, was awarded by Daoas to claimants.

NCIP officials said the anomalous titles were printed on paper bought from an ordinary printing press, instead of government-regulated securities paper. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

WARMTH

EDWIN BACASMAS/PDI PHOTO

The rising sun gives warmth to two war evacuees in Pikit, North Cotabato who went on with their daily routine despite losing the normalcy of their lives when fighting erupted last year in their town between Moro guerrillas and government soldiers.

Mayor seeks arrest of treasurer over missing funds

BACOLOD CITY—Mayor Enrico Roa Elumba of La Castellana town has asked the National Bureau of Investigation to arrest the municipal treasurer who disappeared in the wake of complaints for falsification of public documents and of cash shortage amounting to P4.5 million.

Elumba wrote to Celso Estorga, NBI chief in Bacolod, asking the agency to look for Rey Gicaro and to arrest him so appropriate charges would be filed against him if the evidence against him so warrants.

In his letter, Elumba said that last Nov. 7, he was furnished a copy of a letter from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) that Estorga had committed falsification of public documents.

His transcript of records turned out to be fraudulent and spurious because Southern Negros College, where he claimed to have graduated, issued a certification that Gicaro neither studied nor graduated from that school, Elumba said.

Elumba said that after an audit was conducted, it was found that Gicaro had a cash shortage amounting to P4,535,950. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Illegal logging continues in Vizcaya watershed despite very tight security

By Melvin Gascon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Environment officials here said smuggling of illegally cut narra from the forests of Casecnan in upland Alfonso Castañeda town has continued despite tightened measures imposed by private security personnel there.

Roberto Apigo, provincial environment officer, assailed security personnel of the Casecnan Multi-Purpose Irrigation and Power Project (CMIPP) for their supposed lack of concern to help stop illegal logging within the project site.

"It's quite annoying that while even ordinary folk would find it difficult to enter the (CMIPP) Compound, shippers of narra, who are not even from the area, have been going in and out, but they have not been stopped by security guards," Apigo said.

He said he had received reports that one of the CMIPP reservoirs, which were closely guarded by the firm's security, had become a log pond for narra cut from the forests of nearby Cawayan Village.

The California Energy (CE)-Casecnan, the American firm that owns and operates the CMIPP, has hired private security guards to secure the CMIPP site in Barangay Pelaway, some 150 km from here.

Romualdo Villador, community environment officer, said DENR personnel last week discovered some 1,000 board feet of freshly cut narra at the CMIPP's Taan reservoir.

Villador said as forest guards manually hauled each piece 'of lumber to their vehicle some 500 meters away, illegal loggers sneaked in and took away the remaining lumber, even as security guards were nearby.

Since the start of its operation in October 2001, security within the CMIPP has been tight. Residents going to Pelaway and Cawayan villages have to pass through security check at the gates before they are allowed to enter. Visitors are given access only with the approval of CMIPP management.

Lawyer Linda Castillo, vice president for corporate and legal affairs of CE-Casecnan, said the company had to impose strict security measures due to the reported presence of communist rebels in the area.

Castillo said illegal logging is a "police matter."

"We do not want to dip our fingers on matters that concern the police. We believe that illegal logging remains purely a police matter," she said.

Senior Supt. Felix Caddali, provincial police director and head of the Casecnan Security Task Group, said he would ask Senior Insp. Emil Tumibay, chief of the second provincial police mobile group in the area, to check the reports of illegal logging.

Comelec disqualifies Samar mayoral bet

THE COMMISSION on Elections has disqualified a candidate for mayor in Sulat, Eastern Samar for lacking the one year residence requirement, according to a news release.

This makes reelectionist Mayor Javier Zacate the first ever candidate in the town's history to run unopposed.

In a resolution promulgated March 19, the Comelec first division presided over by Rufino Javier and concurred in by Commissioners Resurreccion Borra and Virgilio Garcillano, unanimously decided to cancel the certificate of candidacy of Daniel Jatulan for re-establishing his residence in Sulat only last Dec. 8, 2003 which is less than the one year residence requirement imposed by law.

Responding to a petition for disqualification filed by Pedro Opimo, the Comelec agreed with the findings of the provincial election supervisor of Eastern Samar that Jatulan has lost his residence in Sulat when he established his residence in Barangay San Guillermo, Morong, Rizal where he registered as a voter since June 22, 1997 and had voted there in all national and local elections since then.

Gloria
Serbisyong
Totoo !!!

PRE-BIRTHDAY BASH

JOAN BONDOC/PDI PHOTO

President Macapagal-Arroyo celebrates the eve of her birthday Sunday with a group of tricycle drivers that boasts of at least 400,000 members nationwide. Ms Macapagal's blowout was a P1 million fund for the drivers' cooperative.

Gov't urged to promote Boracay more

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

BORACAY ISLAND, Aklan—Despite an increasing number of tourist arrivals, resort owners here said the government is not doing enough promotion to attract more foreign visitors.

"Few people in other countries know about Boracay," said Henry Chusuey, chair of the board of directors of the Boracay Foundation Inc., which is composed of about 105 owners of resorts, restaurants and other business firms on the island.

He said the government should allocate more funds for promotional campaigns to reach potential tourists from other countries.

"Big markets such as China remain to be tapped," he told the INQUIRER.

Chusuey owns the 85-room Boracay Regency Beach Resort, one of the high-end resorts on the island, and is constructing 110 more rooms.

"Many first-time visitors here only knew about the place from their friends," said BFI president Lara Salaver.

Bruce Gillespie, a tourist from Colorado, said a few Americans know about the island.

"That's unfortunate because I've been to 60 countries and Boracay has the most beautiful beach and atmosphere," he added.

The island-resort, considered the country's premier tourist destination, also faces competition from tourist destinations in Palawan, Cebu and Bohol, said Salaver.

Tourism regional director Edwin Trompeta said the private sector should take the lead in the promotion campaign because the government has limited resources.

He said that in Hong Kong and Singapore, the promotion campaign is spearheaded by privately-run tourism promotion boards.

Tourist arrivals have continuously increased for the past six years mainly due to the significant increase in the number of domestic tourists and Korean visitors visiting the island.

Poll info exec takes new post

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Former Commission on Elections information officer Ferdinand Rafanan formally assumed his post last week as the poll body's main man in Eastern Visayas.

He, nonetheless, welcomed his new assignment even if he described the manner by which he was transferred as "very oppressive," "unjust," "unreasonable" and "an act of persecution."

"Working itself in Region 8 is not something that I do not like. It is the manner that it was done to me and the reason behind it," he told the INQUIRER.

"I am for public service. I can serve anywhere. But my reassignment was unreasonable, unjust, oppressive and was an act of persecution. That is the one I'm fighting against them," he said.

Rafanan was temporarily staying in a hotel while he was looking for a place to stay during his stint as Comelec regional director.

Upon his assumption to office last Thursday, he immediately called a meeting with the region's six provincial supervisors.

Party-list groups dare Gonzales …

From page A1

Casiño said these were hardly reached by government services and were usually ignored by politicians because these were not "vote-rich."

He and Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo claimed that projects of their group financed by pork barrel funds could be verified with various government agencies.

Since 2001, Bayan Muna has put up 174 day care centers or multipurpose halls, 110 school buildings, 109 potable water systems, 62 farm-to-market roads and bridges, and a medical assistance program that has benefited some 10,000 individuals, according to Casiño.

Ocampo added to the list 12 flood-control projects and presented the breakdown of Bayan Muna's "hard" and "soft" projects that totaled P480 million.

Of the total, P352.5 million went to 467 hard projects, referring to roads, bridges, water systems, or buildings. About P127.5 million went to soft projects that included livelihood and health-related assistance, disaster relief and donated computers, according to Ocampo.

Ocampo said the majority of these projects had been finished while some were nearing completion.

Casiño said Malacañang "can easily check" these figures with the Commission on Audit, as well as with the education, health, public works and agriculture departments.

Loser

Casiño noted that Gonzales once led his own party-list group, Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, which already "lost twice" in the 1998 and 2001 polls.

"He may just be bitter for being *talunan* (a loser)," he told the INQUIRER.

Suara Bangsamoro said Gonzales' call for its disqualification was against the essence of the electoral party-list system.

"With his words and actions, Gonzales is gradually showing himself as an enemy of the people," said Amirah Ali Lidasan, a Suara Bangsamoro nominee.

Lidasan said Gonzales was seeking the disqualification of "legal and genuine people's organizations that carry the true sentiments of the oppressed Moro and Filipino people."

Roco allayed the government apprehension over the supposed threat posed by the six party-list groups to national security.

"For as long as important segments of society are allowed equal access to the democratic process, the threat of renewed insurgency in the scale of the Marcos years is lessened," he said.

Cross-eyed

Roco questioned the double standard used by Gonzales, noting that while he alleged that these organizations were misusing government funds, he was turning a blind eye to Ms Macapagal's misuse of public funds for her election campaign. "It seems Gonzales is getting cross-eyed," he said in a statement.

In Pozzorubio, Pangasinan, Lacson said even fronts of the CPP were eligible to participate in the electoral process.

"In the first place, the CPP has been legitimized with the repeal of Republic Act No. 1700. So there is no basis (for asking for the disqualification of the alleged Communist fronts)," Lacson said during a break in his campaign sortie in the town.

Lacson, a former police chief and intelligence officer in the defunct Constabulary, claimed that Bayan Muna and its allied party-list groups were legal fronts of the CPP.

Ms Macapagal distanced herself from the recommendation of her national security adviser to disqualify the six party-list groups.

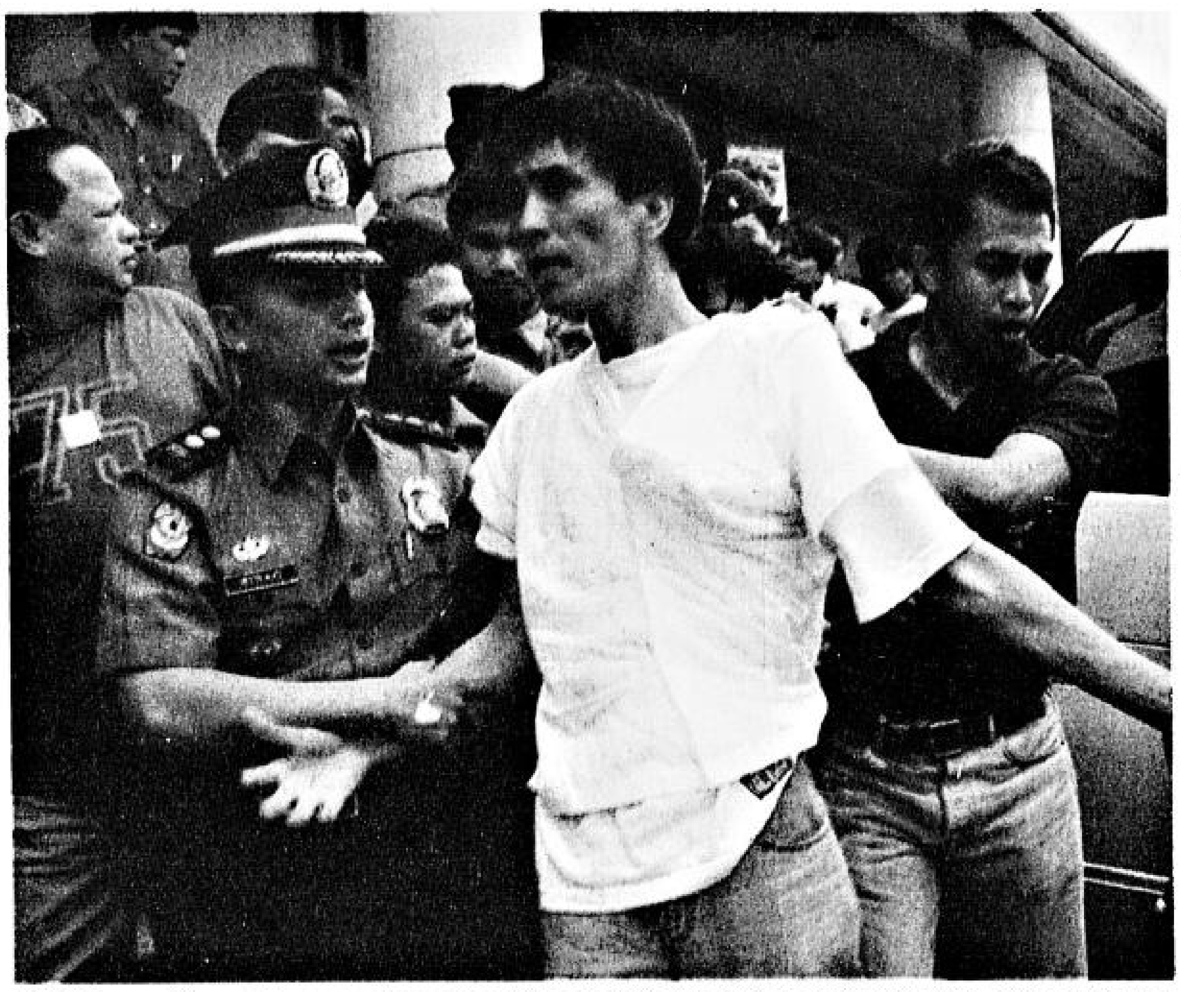
"We'll invite him to the briefing (today) and we'll ask him to explain the reason why he made that proposal to the council. Beyond that we cannot make any comment, we were not privy to the information that Secretary Gonzales has," Bunye said.

Gonzales' recommendation was made just as the government and communist-led National Democratic Front peace panels were undertaking the second round of formal peace negotiations in Oslo.

Peace talks

Chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III, who returned to Manila on Sunday night, sought to downplay the impact of Gonzales' proposal to the continuation of the peace talks.

"Well, I don't know how it will affect the peace process although I was informed that this development was before the second round of formal talks," Bello said. The two panels held talks in Oslo from March 30 to April 3.



POLICE arrest Bayan Muna secretary general Robert de Castro during a rally at the Nica office on V. Luna Road in Quezon City.

JOAN BONDOC

Comelec Chair Abalos said Gonzales' allegations could be grounds for disqualification of the six party-list groups but these must be proven.

"To charge is one thing, to prove it is another … What disloyal conduct? *Ayaw na ba nila sa Pilipinas* (Do they dislike the Philippines?)," Abalos said.

He pointed out that in filing their certificates of candidacy and during the hearings on the accreditation of Bayan Muna, party leaders took an oath renouncing violence.

But the military claims that the six party-list groups were indeed CPP fronts.

"There are front organizations which are operating to support the armed component and these includes some party-list members, like Anakpawis and Bayan Muna," Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, Public Information Office chief of the armed forces, told reporters.

Lucero said he could not accept the fact that government funds were being used to undermine our government. He based his assumptions on intelligence reports the military had received. He also added Migrante to the list.

Lucero narrated that after an encounter between government troops and the NPA on March 16 in San Narciso, Quezon, soldiers saw Anakpawis leaflets in the area.

"This only shows that the NPAs are also active in this coming election. First, by supporting those progressive candidates and second, by supporting party-list organizations which are front organizations of the NPAs," he explained.

In the middle of the interview with reporters, Lucero said the front organizations and their members were considered threats to national security.

But at the end of the interview, he corrected his statement. He said the party-list groups could not be considered threats to national security "because they are not armed."

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal accused Gonzales of replicating in the country the anti-communist witch-hunt that the infamous Joseph McCarthy launched in the United States in the early 1950s.

"(Ms Macapagal), Gonzales and their ilk are very worried that a significant number of progressive party-list representatives in the Philippine Congress would become a formidable stumbling block against US-dictated economic and military policies," Rosal said in a statement. ***With reports from Norman Bordadora and Alcuin Papa***

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Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

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Nilipat na naman ang selebrasyon ng Bataan Day. Hindi kaya nawawala na ang tunay na halaga ng makasaysayang araw? Pero sanay na ang mga beterano ng Bataan Death March sa pagtitiis. Ang kuwento ng Bataan ay kuwento ng pagkabigo at pagdurusa. Mamayang alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC. (May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)

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DOTC worried over NLEX traffic

By Clarissa Batino

TRANSPORTATION Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the Lopez-controlled Manila North Tollways Corporation (MNTC) could be blamed and penalized if people travelling north for the Holy Week get bogged down in traffic along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

Mendoza said the MNTC—a joint venture of the Lopezes' Benpres Holdings Corp. and the state-run Philippine National Construction Corp.—should have finished its construction along the north expressway by now.

He said the Department of Public Works and Highways could invoke a penalty clause in the government's contract with the MNTC.

"I think that by this time, the MNTC and PNCC should have completed the construction work along the north expressway. Maybe DPWH should review the contract and see if there is a penalty clause there," said the transport chief.

He said about 40,000 vehicles could be using the expressway each day over the Holy Week.

But the MNTC said that it was even ahead of its schedule.

Marlyn Ochoa, the company's assistant vice president and head of external relations, said the P18-billion rehabilitation and modernization of the North Luzon Expressway was scheduled for completion in 2005.

She said the group was even ahead of its timetable such that by the fourth quarter, the MNTC could already take over the PNCC operations of the 83.7-kilometer highway.

Ochoa said that the MNTC would stop construction work on the northbound portion of the NLEX from Edsa to Valenzuela today until Thursday, and on the southbound lane from Saturday to Monday.

"At least three lanes would be open to traffic on the portion that is still under construction," added the MNTC spokesperson.

MNTC's project in the north highway includes the expansion and widening of the lanes to accommodate more vehicles.

Campaigning banned for 2 days

GIVE it a rest.

That was the warning of Election Officer IV Rosalinda Radin of Manila's local Comelec to all national and local candidates who might think of campaigning in the city on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

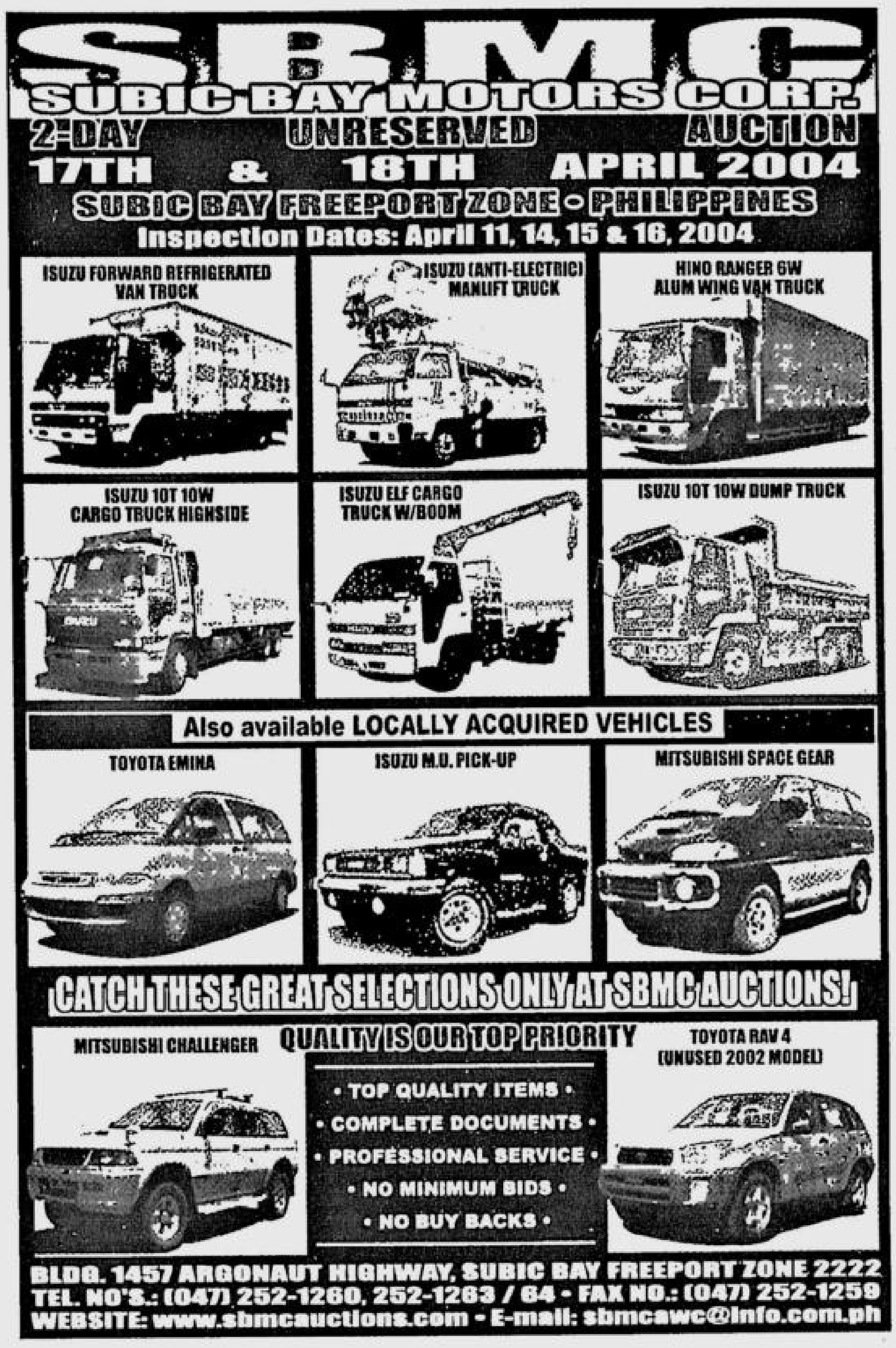
She said yesterday that all forms of campaigning were prohibited on these two days, as stated in Comelec Resolution 6222, the Comelec's calendar of activities and periods on prohibited acts for the May 10 elections.

The resolution, passed on Nov. 25 last year, does not allow campaign sorties, house-to-house visits, motorcades and other campaign activities on April 8 and 9, in observance of the Holy Week.

"The barangay officials would be monitoring them," said Radin.

Violators face imprisonment of six months to six years.

On top of this, violators may face disqualification and the suspension of their right to vote. *Tarra Quismundo*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Mall owner's son rapped

By Margaux Ortiz

"IT'S ABOUT time I speak out about my husband's abuses."

Thus said Melissa Mercado Martel, 43, as she filed frustrated parricide charges yesterday against husband Robert "Roby" Martel, son of Harrison Plaza Mall owner Antonio Martel Jr.

In a complaint-affidavit filed before the Makati Prosecutor's Office, Melissa said Roby beat her up and shot her in the stomach with a .38-caliber revolver inside their Makati condominium on Aug. 26, last year.

Melissa, daughter of actor Luis Gonzales, told reporters that she spent three months recuperating in the hospital and seeking spiritual guidance.

MELISSA Martel

"Justice should be served this time," Melissa said. "If I can't protect myself, how could I protect my children?"

Melissa described Roby as a moody and violent man, saying her husband physically and verbally abused her throughout their 20-year marriage.

"He (Roby) was beyond trigger-happy," Melissa's lawyer, Lourdes Cruz, said.

Cruz stressed that Roby should be imprisoned because he was a "danger to society."

Melissa also said that on Oct. 15, 2003, she was "forced, intimidated, harassed and pressured by her husband" to sign an affidavit of desistance prepared by his representatives.

"The statements contained in the affidavit of desistance are false and untrue," Melissa said.

Inconsistencies save accused

By Tarra Quismundo

THE INCONSISTENT testimonies of National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents led to the release of a photographer who had been in jail for four years on drug trafficking charges.

Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 41 Judge Rodolfo Ponferrada ordered the release of Walde Botalon Jr., 39, after he found the testimonies of the arresting NBI agents conflicting.

NBI agent Sixto Comia testified that a woman was present when Botalon was arrested during a buy bust on Dec. 28, 1999.

His partner, Ronald Abulencia, however, did not mention any woman in his testimony.

Meanwhile, a sidewalk vendor who saw the operation on Dagonoy Street in Sta. Ana testified that no buy-bust took place.

The vendor said Botalon was "abducted" by two men who forced him into a dark brown car.

Botalon's employer, Sonny Young, was also charged with drug violations but was cleared of the charges.

Is a complete paralytic capable of rape?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IS A MAN who's a complete paralytic from the chest down capable of rape?

Jeff Quesada, 36, whose condition in medical term is called quadriplegic cerebral palsy, has been detained at the Malolos City Jail on a charge that he raped his neighbor's 16-year-old housemaid.

Jeff can't move his hands and feet. He can only sit on a toilet bowl by being carried to it from his wheelchair by two men.

The "victim" said she was raped by Jeff with the help of his cousin, Iza Kristin Cardoza Ocampo, 21. It was Ocampo who inserted Jeff's organ into her vagina, the supposed rape victim claims.

The inquest prosecutor, Rita S. Gammad, apparently believed the victim's cock-and-bull story because she filed the rape complaint.

If the good prosecutor had only used her common sense she would have dropped the case straightaway. For how could a paralytic commit rape when he can't even hold his penis? His motor skills are zero.

Anybody who's got a modicum of intelligence would say that Jeff was not capable of rape. For how could a paraplegic commit rape when he can't even hold his penis?

His motor skills are nil, according to my staff at "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" public service program that visited Jeff at the Malolos jail.

The "victim" said Jeff poked a gun at her, that was why she gave in to his desire.

Jeff could not hold a gun because both his hands are twisted. When "Isumbong" staff asked him to hold an empty gun borrowed from the jail warden, he couldn't. All he could do was clip the gun with the back of his palms. He couldn't even raise it.

Now, if both Jeff's hands and feet are limp, it follows that his penis is also limp or not capable of erection. The "victim" said he was able to enter her.

* * *

Jeff said "something" did happen between him and the girl.

But he hastened to add that it was the girl who did all the work. He said he and the girl were phone pals, and the girl was the one who initiated the sexual relations.

***"Sabi niya sa akin mahal na mahal niya ako,"* Jeff said. The girl was Jeff's first and only girlfriend.**

The tryst took place in a vacant apartment in their neighborhood. His cousin Iza secured the place for the two lovers.

Everybody in the neighborhood knew about Jeff's relationship with the girl.

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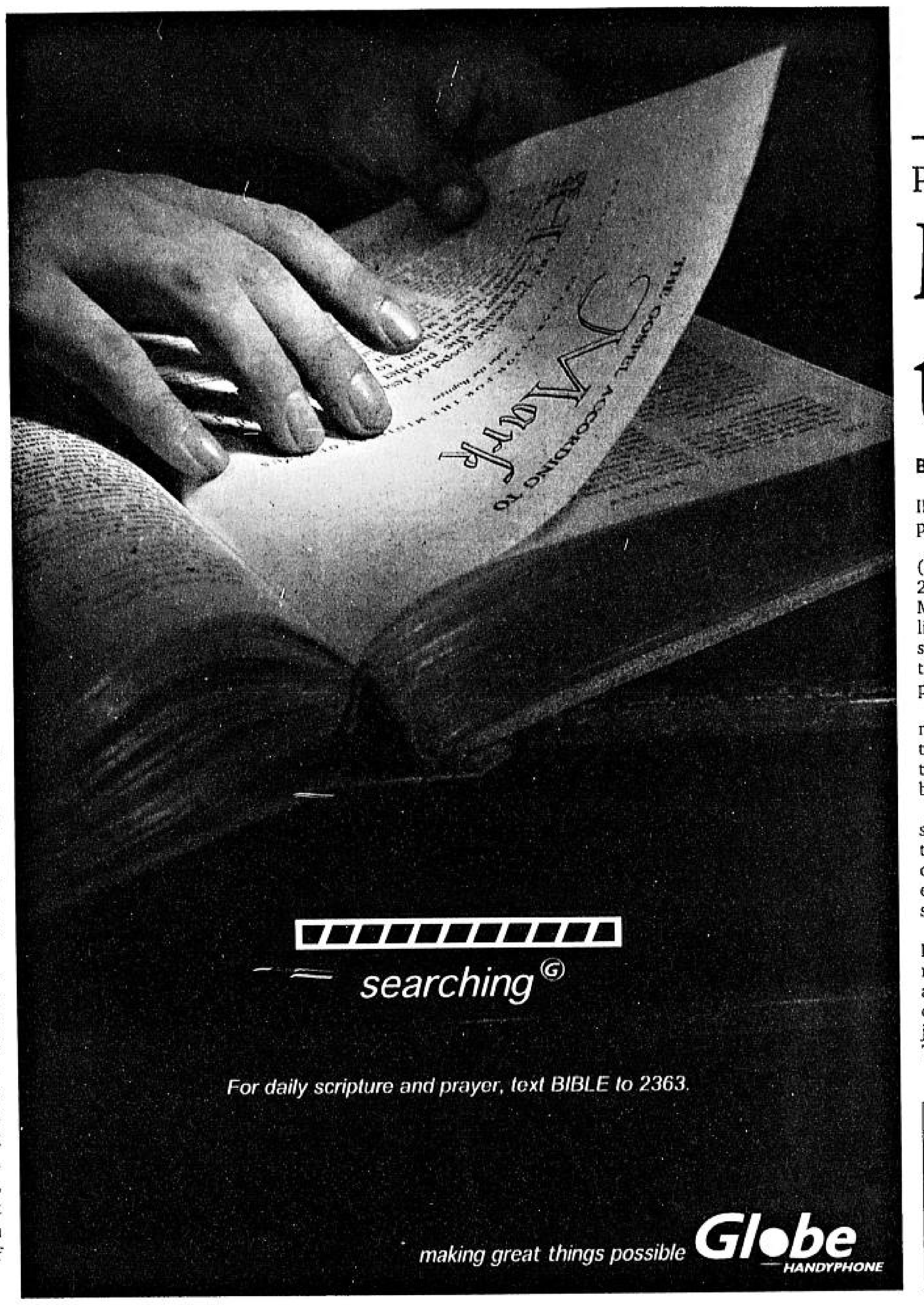
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POPCOM WARNING

Metro folk too many

By Blanche Rivera

IF YOU think there are too many people around you, you're right.

The Commission on Population (Popcom) disclosed yesterday that 2003 figures showed that Metro Manila was packed with 13 million people spread over only 636 square kilometers of land. And that translated to 15,617 persons per square kilometer.

Popcom executive director Tomas Osias then expressed concern that if the situation was not controlled, the metropolis might not be able to sustain the populace.

"Already the environment is showing signs of over-exploitation because of the large number of people who compete for limited resources," Osias said in a statement.

Last year, the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) ranked Metro Manila as 19th among the 20 most dense megacities in the world. It follows Beijing, Cairo and Osaka-Kobe. Tokyo ranked No. 1.

The UNPD defined a megacity as a grouping of cities with a population of 10 million or more.

On a national scale, Osias warned that if the population was not controlled, more and more people would be migrating to urban areas and clogging cities all over the country.

He explained that heads of households tended to look for jobs in urban areas because of the lack of opportunities in the countryside.

Three cities—Quezon City, Manila and Caloocan—have surpassed the one million population mark in the National Capital Region.

Outside Metro Manila, Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon have the highest population size in the country, while Davao City is the only city outside Metro Manila to have more than a million residents.

The Philippines is one of the fastest urbanizing countries, with more than half of its 84-million population living in urban areas. In 1990, 47 percent of the population was already urbanized.

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(In exact order)

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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: US NCAA Finals; 11 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—See who cuts down the nets and has that one shining moment.
NBA Greatest Games-Suns vs Spurs, Game 6, 1993 Western Semifinals; 9 a.m.—Charles Barkley nails a clutch jumper to send Phoenix to the Western Finals.
MOTOR SPORTS: F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix Race Day; 2:30 p.m. (r); Star Sports—Shift to reverse to see all the spectacular action on the racetrack.
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

Espiritu makes comeback in Tour Pilipinas

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VICTOR Espiritu, who stirred the national cycling scene in 1996 by capturing the title on his rookie year, will be making a grand comeback when the Tour Pilipinas returns next week.

Espiritu, now 28, skipped the summer event last year because of obligations to the national team. But he is raring to get another crack at glory when he pedals off with 83 others on April 15 in Sorsogon City.

"I'm glad to be back, although the field may be tough, I'm very confident this year," said Espiritu, who won a gold medal in the 1997 Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta and a silver in the Vietnam SEAG last year.

Standing on his way will be defending champion Arnel Quirimit, who ruled last year's 15-stage revival event.

It's a different story this year, though.

The Tour will be longer, stretching to 17 stages all around Luzon. It will go to as far south as Sorsogon for the initial stage to as far north as Laoag in the 12th stage.

"I'm a bit older now so things will be a different," said Espiritu, who won the title at the age of 20. "But I would be ahead in terms of experience."

The Tour will cover a total of 2,758.69 kilometers visiting Bicolandia in the first few stages before climbing back to Metro Manila for the 5th stage rendezvous, all the way up to Zambales, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya and Cagayan.

Tour Pilipinas chair Bert Lina of the sponsoring Air 21 said this year's staging will have several innovations to improve the conduct of the event.

For the first time in the Tour, Lina said, a photo finish device will be employed to decide on dead heats or close shaves.

This year's riders will be led by team captains Quirimit (Tanduay), Espiritu (Beer na Beer), last year's runner up Merculio Ramos (Samsung), Warren Davadilla (Purefoods), Rhyan Tanguilig (PLDT), Albert Primero (Dole), former back-to-back champion Carlo Guieb (Marsman-Drysdale), two-time champ Renato Dolosa (Metro Drug), Felix Celeste (VAT Riders), Enrique Domingo (Postmen), Placido Valdez (Patrol 117) and Santy Barnachea (Mail and More).

Overall champion will get P200,000, while the team overall winner receives P1 million.

Spurs halt Lakers' 11-game win run

Bucks clip Raptors, gain playoffs

LOS ANGELES—With so much attention focused on the Lakers, Kings and Timberwolves, it's easy to forget that the San Antonio Spurs are reigning NBA champions.

They served a strong reminder Sunday.

Tony Parker had 29 points and nine assists and the Spurs beat the Los Angeles Lakers, 95-89, for their sixth straight victory, moving them within 1 1/2 games of the Western Conference lead.

Tim Duncan added 18 points, 13 rebounds and six assists and Bruce Bowen and Manu Ginobili scored 12 points each for the Spurs (52-25), who have won eight of nine to move into contention for the Midwest Division title and No. 1 seed in the West.

"Every year it's like this—it's not new to us," Duncan said. "It doesn't matter. We're going to keep playing."

The Lakers, who had their 11-game winning streak snapped, certainly aren't overlooking the Spurs.

"They're the defending champions until somebody beats them," Kobe Bryant said. "We were in that position before."

San Antonio won the championship in 1999 before Los Angeles won the next three. The Spurs won last year, eliminating the Lakers along the way.

The Lakers entered with an NBA-best 22-4 record since the All-Star break.

In Toronto, Brian Skinner had 19 points and a season-high 14 rebounds and the Milwaukee Bucks clinched a playoff spot with a 90-83 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Michael Redd added 17 points for the Bucks, who sit in fourth place in the Eastern Conference by a half game over New Orleans, which played at Seattle later.

In Houston, Peja Stojakovic had 28 points and 11 rebounds, and Chris Webber added 19 points to lead the Sacramento Kings over the Houston Rockets, 99-94.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Richard Hamilton scored 24 points and the Detroit Pistons' defense stifled the Indiana Pacers, 79-61. *AP*

Complete results:

Milwaukee 90, Toronto 83; Sacramento 99, Houston 94; Detroit 79, Indiana 61; Washington 112, Boston 102; Minnesota 90, Memphis 82; San Antonio 95, LA Lakers 89; New Jersey 106, Atlanta 89; Seattle 96, New Orleans 88; Utah 97, LA Clippers 92.

RASHO Nesterovic (left) of San Antonio posts up against Karl Malone of the LA Lakers. AFP

Annika prevails; Jenny bags ₱1M

SORENSTAM AP

LOS ANGELES—Annika Sorenstam won her 50th LPGA Tour title, birdieing three of the final five holes Sunday for a 3-under 69 and a three-stroke victory in the Office Depot Championship.

The LPGA Hall of Famer, also the tournament winner in 2001 and 2003 and the runner-up in 2002, had a 9-under 207 total.

Ashli Bunch closed with a 65 to tie for second with Meg Mallon at 6 under. Mallon, two shots off Sorenstam's lead beginning the day, shot a 70.

Filipina Jennifer Rosales carded a 75 and landed in a tie for 17th at 218. She pocketed $19,655 (P1.1 million).

Sorenstam, who came on the LPGA Tour full time in 1994, led all three days of the tournament, although Bunch tied her at the top briefly during the final round. Sorenstam pulled away when she found her putting touch down the stretch.

Bunch, winless since coming on the tour in 1999, had pulled even at 6 under with Sorenstam, who was finishing No. 13 while Bunch was completing her round.

Sorenstam made sure it didn't stay tied. At par for the day when she stepped up to a 12-foot birdie putt on No. 14, she sank it to go to 7-under, built a two-shot lead with another 12-foot birdie on No. 16, then added a tap-in birdie on the next hole. *AP*

Gonzales, Lipa bury hatchet

By June Navarro

FOR Wesley Gonzales of FedEx, his rift with team head coach Joe Lipa during his college days at the Ateneo is now water under the bridge.

Breaking his silence after rumors insinuating their differences persisted, Gonzales said he opted to move on and work under Lipa's tutelage again instead of dwelling in the past.

"I'm okay with coach Joe. In fact, on the night of the draft, I called him up and thanked him for the valuable lessons that I have learned from that experience," said the 6-foot-3 Gonzales, who was picked ninth overall by the Express.

It's no secret that Gonzales, one of the Blue Eagles' reliable enforcers during his collegiate stint, strained his relationship with the former Ateneo bench tactician that forced him to sit out the entire 2001 UAAP season.

"I really don't want to talk about it. It's all in the past and I intend to leave it there. Actually, if not for him, I wouldn't be here in the PBA," said Gonzales without elaborating.

Gonzales has no apprehensions on digesting Lipa's system, stressing that he looks up to the 58-year-old veteran amateur coach as a father who could help a rookie like him find his way in the PBA.

Mayol faces Indon today

ORIENTAL and Pacific Boxing Federation minimum weight champ Rodel Mayol will put his reputation on the line when he tangles with dangerous Indonesian Julio de la Basez today in Indonesia.

Although the OPBF title will not be put at stake, Mayol's titles and unbeaten record will be risked against the local boy at the RCTI Studio in Jakarta.

Considered by experts as the Philippines' best pound-for-pound fighter outside of Manny Pacquiao, Mayol is unbeaten in 16 fights with 13 KO's, and is currently ranked WBC No. 3, WBA No. 6, and IBF No. 10.

Meanwhile, 19-year-old ALA Boy Reynald Tribo annexed the vacant RP superbantam title via split decision over Bukidnon's Jake Verano in Mandaue City.

Tribo survived a strong finish by Verano, banking on an early lead to earn the nod of two judges, 116-113, 116-115. The third judge saw it 115-113 for Verano, who controlled the last two rounds. *Salven Lagumbay, Contributor*

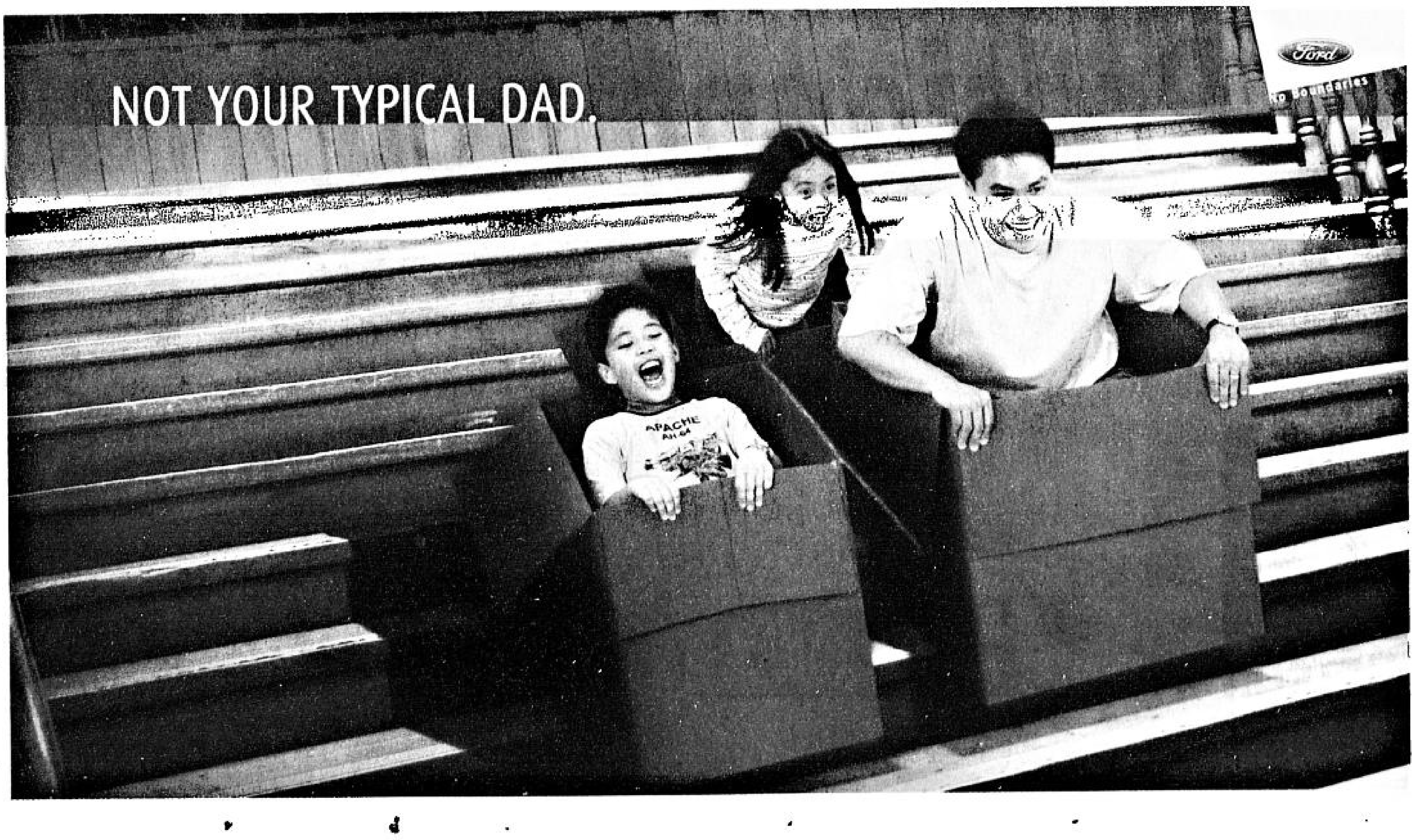
Top PBL squads collide

GAMES TODAY
(*Pasig Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Sunkist-UST vs Hapee; 4 p.m.—Welcoat vs Viva-FEU

ALL FOUR unbeaten teams stake their immaculate slates when they mix it up today in the PBL 2nd Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Defending champion Hapee Toothpaste, multititled Welcoat Paints, Viva Mineral Water-FEU and Sunkist-UST will break the gridlock at the top of the standings where they all logged two victories apiece.

The Teeth Sparklers square off with the Tigers at 2 p.m., while the Paint Masters take on the Tamaraws at 4 p.m. *Marc Anthony Reyes*



Roddick whips hobbled Coria

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida—Andy Roddick battled a queasy stomach in the final of the Nasdaq-100 Open, and he was the healthiest player on the court.

The curse of Key Biscayne struck again Sunday, and it hit Guillermo Coria of Argentina hardest. He retired because of back spasms after losing the first three points of the fourth set trailing, 6-7 (2), 6-3, 6-1.

It's the fourth time in 15 years that the men's final has been affected by an ailing player. Roddick acknowledged he could have done worse than a little nausea.

"I'll take sick to my stomach over injured any day," Roddick said. "I was definitely working with the lesser of two evils."

Coria said he hurt his back in the first set. Trailing 6-5, he received treatment from a trainer during a changeover, then played a flawless tiebreaker to pull out the set.

But Coria walked to the chair frowning and shaking his head and threw his racket at his bag. As Roddick took control in the second and third sets, Coria occasionally clutched his back between points, and his movement and serve were clearly affected.

"Guillermo slowed by an injury is still faster than about 95 percent of the guys on tour," Roddick said. "But it's tough playing with an injury."

After hitting a forehand into the net in the first game of the final set, Coria waved his hands in frustration and walked to the net to concede.

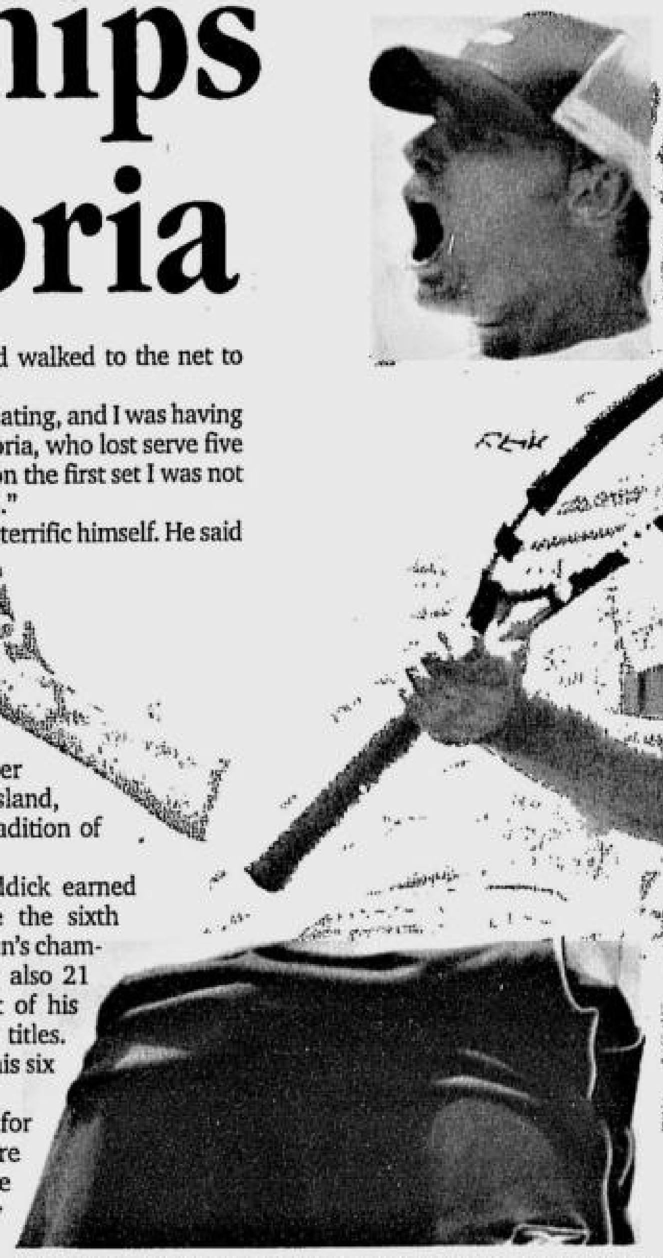
"The pain was excruciating, and I was having trouble serving," said Coria, who lost serve five times. "I knew after I won the first set I was not going to be able to finish."

Roddick felt less than terrific himself. He said he woke up sick to his stomach, and the queasiness lingered during the match.

Maybe there's something in the water that surrounds the island, given Key Biscayne's tradition of tainted finals.

The 21-year-old Roddick earned $533,350 and became the sixth American to win the men's championship. Sampras was also 21 when he won the first of his three Key Biscayne titles. Agassi won the first of his six titles in the event at 19.

Coria settled for $266,675, and fans were left to wonder: Had he stayed healthy, how would the match have gone? *AP*



RODDICK: I was definitely working with the lesser of two evils. REUTERS

Okafor-led UConn battles Georgia Tech

SAN ANTONIO—Few people draw the distinction between life and basketball more clearly than Emeka Okafor, the star center for the University of Connecticut.

The son of a man who grew up in war-ravaged Nigeria, Okafor has led an easy life by comparison, and he's the first to concede that.

"My dad's high school education was interrupted by a civil war and they weren't sure they were going to eat the next day," Okafor said. "And here I am in the United States wondering what I'm going to get for Christmas."

On Monday, Okafor will lead UConn against Georgia Tech in the national final, hoping to push the Huskies to one half of a possible sweep of the men's and women's championships. The Connecticut women beat Minnesota, 67-58, Sunday night to advance to the championship game.

A win for the guys would mark the crowning achievement on the basketball court for Okafor, although it would be only part of the picture in his well-rounded life.

The 6-foot-10 (two-meter-tall) All-American, who averages 17 points and 11 rebounds, will earn his degree in finance in May with a 3.8 grade-point average. After that, he'll probably be a top-five pick in the NBA draft in June.

It took Okafor just three years to earn his degree, an impressive accomplishment that doesn't surprise those who know him. Okafor shrugs it off, calling it more a matter of circumstance than anything great he did.

"I was at school in the summer working on basketball, so I decided to take some classes while I was there," he said.

In his eyes, the successes on the court and in the classroom are equally important.

"They go hand in hand, they're both a part of me," he said. "I can't say I'm more proud of one than the other. Not many people graduate in three years. Not many people do what I've done. But it's because I had the opportunity." *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Ho eyes racing investment here

MACAU business tycoon Dr. Stanley Ho yesterday expressed interest in reviving his plan to invest $30 million in the Philippines. Included in the plan are such projects as a new hotel complex, infrastructure development, low-cost housing for the poor, and quite possibly, involvement in the highly-regulated horse racing industry. Ho is currently chair of the Macau Jockey Club, exclusive operator of horse racing and dog racing activities in Macau. At present, only two franchise holders, the Manila Jockey Club Inc. (MJCI) and Philippine Racing Club Inc. (PRCI) are conducting horse racing activities on a weekly basis on an alternating schedule throughout the year. Incidentally, the design of the new MJCI racing complex (San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite) has been patterned after the Taipa Racecourse of the Macau Jockey Club, notably its Turf Club building, which bears a striking resemblance to the Macau Jockey Club Turf building. Ho was a recent visitor here when he received an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Angeles (Pampanga). In addition to his extensive socio-civic involvement in Hong Kong and Macau, Dr. Ho could also be credited for China's successful bid to host the Olympic Games in 2008, having served as advisor to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bidding Committee.

Orioles rule 'Opening Night' in US

NEW YORK—Javy Lopez homered on the first pitch he saw in a Baltimore uniform as the Orioles opened their American League season with a 7-2 home romp over Pedro Martinez and the Boston Red Sox on Sunday. The game was billed as "Opening Night" in major league baseball in the United States, as the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and the New York Yankees have already started the regular season with a two-game series in Japan. Lopez, who was signed as a free agent in the off-season from the Atlanta Braves, went 3-for-4 and scored three runs. He homered off Martinez on the first pitch in the bottom of the second inning to key a three-run Baltimore rally off Martinez. Those were the only runs Martinez would allow, as he settled down and pitched out of several early inning jams. *Reuters*

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LA SALLE TRACKSTERS
Members of the victorious La Salle track and field team pose with their trophies after ending 18 years of frustration in the recent UAAP athletics wars. Standing (from left) are Manny Salgado, asst. manager; coach Jeoffrey Chua, Ralph Saguilon, Pep Agosto, Bruce Goutinas, Chris Olita, Cliff Sy, Ivan Berjamin, Dos Dabao, Romy Sotto (consultant); team manager Terry Capistrano and sports director Dan Jose. Seated (from left) are Joar Calvadores, Jeremy Lee, Joseph Tamandong, Mat Paluay, Christian Borja (skipper), Alvin Cardinal, Benjo Bantugon, JM Durian and Gani Bayson.

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SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I TOLD myself I would not pass up the chance to give my so-called two-cents' worth of comment on it once it's here. I refer to the Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship.

This is one tournament whose importance, if not impact, is often overlooked by the sports world that is now seemingly numbed by the callousness of our so-called sports leaders.

I can only think of heaving a sigh of, uh-oh, anguish?

Ah, but it's going to be a wasted sigh again and so, I did what I thought was the best move: Cut the crap.

And so, instead of being a cynic, a negativist, I'd taken the position of looking on the bright side of things. The turnaround has made the positive cells working magic for me.

And how to correctly treat the Lancer event then?

Accord it its due: Salute the people behind this extremely laudable tennis event. There are too many of them to be mentioned here. But if only for the record, the spearheads include Mitsubishi's Kengo Takase, Mel Dizon, Thelma Lozano (is she really retired?) and Froi Dytiangquin, Accel's Philip Go, Wilson Sports' Gerry Tan, and Philippine Tennis Association president Salvador "Buddy" Andrada and his VP for internal affairs Luis Antonio Mendoza (not my relative).

I remember telling Buddy weeks back that I'd do my best not to miss the Lancer event. I even promised myself I would not miss the finals. Unfortunately, all my plans went pfft.

Events beyond my control had prevented me from coming. One was the operation of a dearest friend of mine some days ago. I'm sure Buddy understood although, as I keep saying here, between friends there's no need to explain.

Anyway, I've seen snippets of it on TV and the tournament, which had its fitting climax on Sunday, was a real smash hit.

The sun-baked Rizal Memorial Tennis Center had become once more the venue of great tennis shots from the slew of youngsters from 25 nations, who braved the sweltering heat to provide our fans a glimpse of what to expect from them five, seven years from now. It is from this batch that the future of tennis would surely come. The Hewitts, Philipoussises, Henmans, Ivanisevices, and many more top tennis players in the world today, have all been products of the Lancer tournament.

To those not in the know, the Lancer tournament is part of a series of city-hopping tournaments in the world staged annually by the International Tennis Juniors Federation. Manila has been part of the Tour mainly because for the last 15 years, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines has been the tournament's sole major sponsor.

If Mitsubishi's gesture is not a show of genuine concern for Philippine sports, what is?

Anyway, a Briton named Tom Rushby and a Taiwanese named Chan Yung Jan won the Lancer event.

As if to live up to his name, Rushby rushed to a two-set victory over Tushar Liberhand of India, 6-4, 7-6 (10-8). Chan won over her compatriot, Hsu Weh Hsin, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.

The 17-year-old Rushby, from Derby, England, was a surprise winner if we go by the yardstick of excellence. He was a "mere" No. 9 going to the Philippine leg even as he won the Malaysian stop two weeks ago. In advancing to the finals of the Manila leg, Rushby ousted top seed Karan Rastogi of India and then eliminated No. 4 William Ward of New Zealand to set up his finals showdown with Liberhand.

Rushby needed only 1 hour and 40 minutes in pocketing his second title in two weeks using mainly the baseline to mount his offensive.

"I just wanted to beat him from the baseline using my forehand," said Rushby, who became only the second Briton to win the Manila leg after Martin Lee in 1995.

Surprisingly, the 14-year-old Chan, although ranked only No. 7, appeared a convincing winner over Hsu, ranked No. 2 in the tournament and the world's No. 21.

"After losing the first set, I told myself not to surrender," said Chan, who had previously won in Thailand and Malaysia and beaten Hsu three times already. "It feels good to win again."

For sure, all those behind the Lancer event were winners themselves. I will not be surprised if they feel they're still in Cloud 9.

***

FASTBREAK. Glad to know that Pong Salenga, the miracle man who made INQUIRER photog chief Ernie Sarmiento's coverage of the 2000 Sydney Olympics a smashing success, is in town enjoying the intrinsic beauty of his roots once more. Pong, who will fly back to Sydney on Saturday, was the Filipino guy in Sydney who restored Ernie's laptop to perfection, in the process making Ernie's coverage of the Olympiad a virtual walk in the park. Hey, Pong, if we could maybe have a beer or two with Ernie, wouldn't that be nice?

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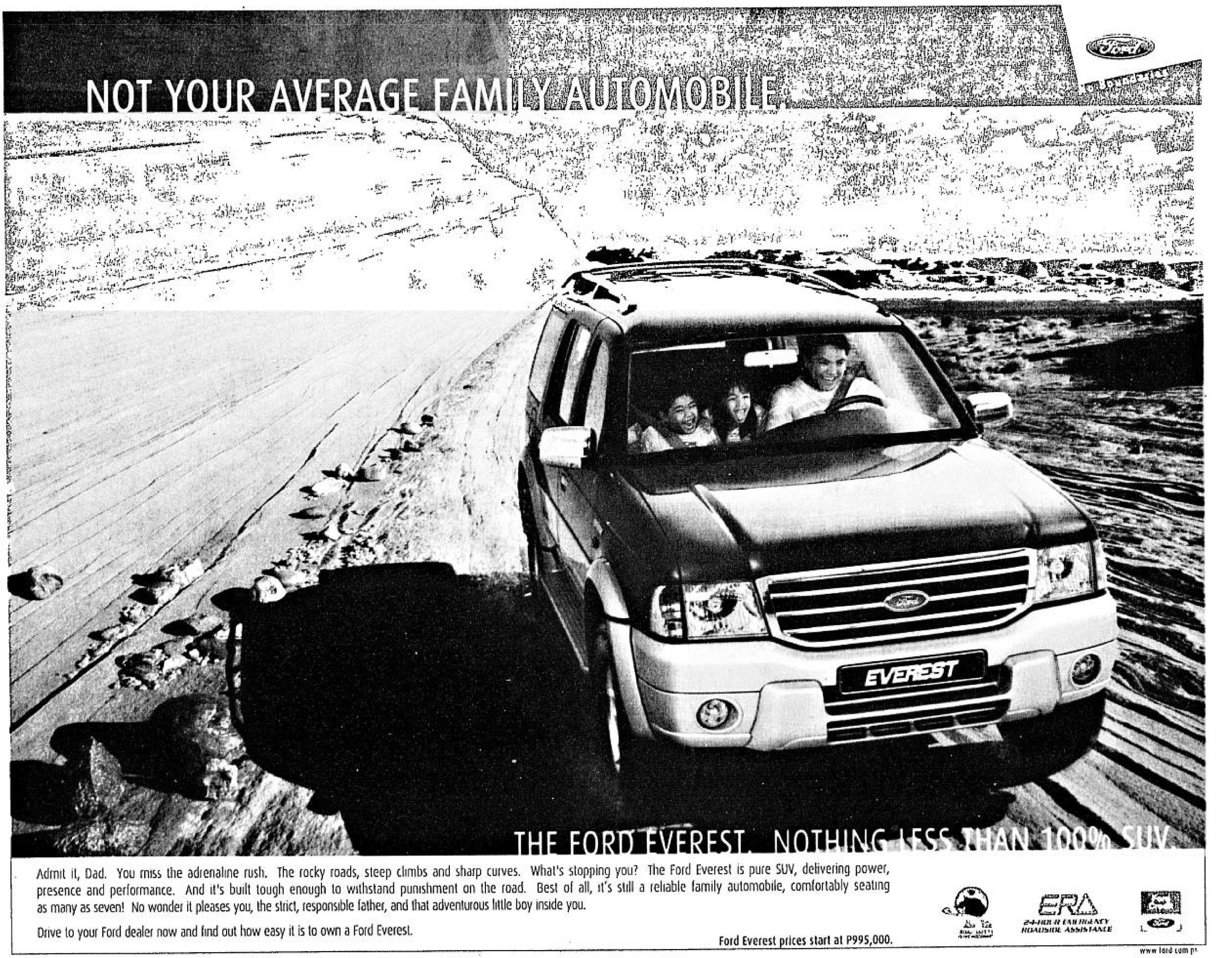
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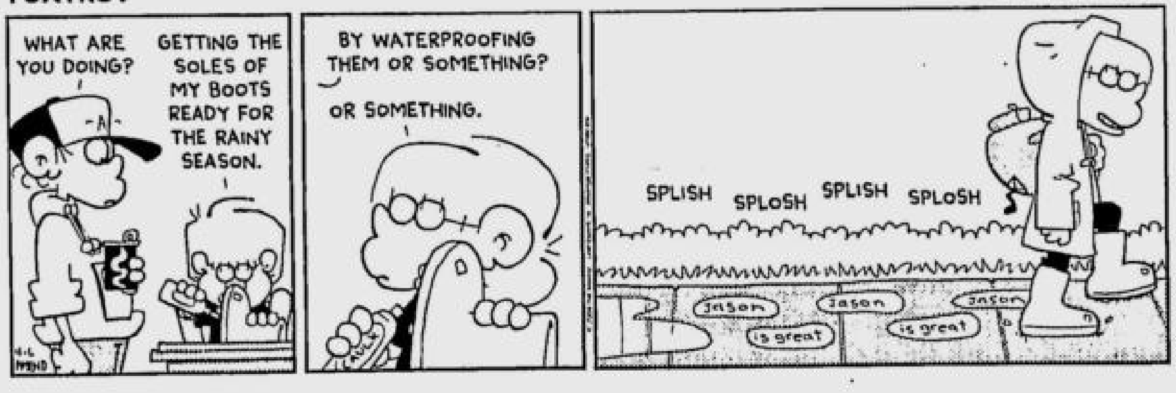
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BY WATERPROOFING THEM OR SOMETHING?
OR SOMETHING.
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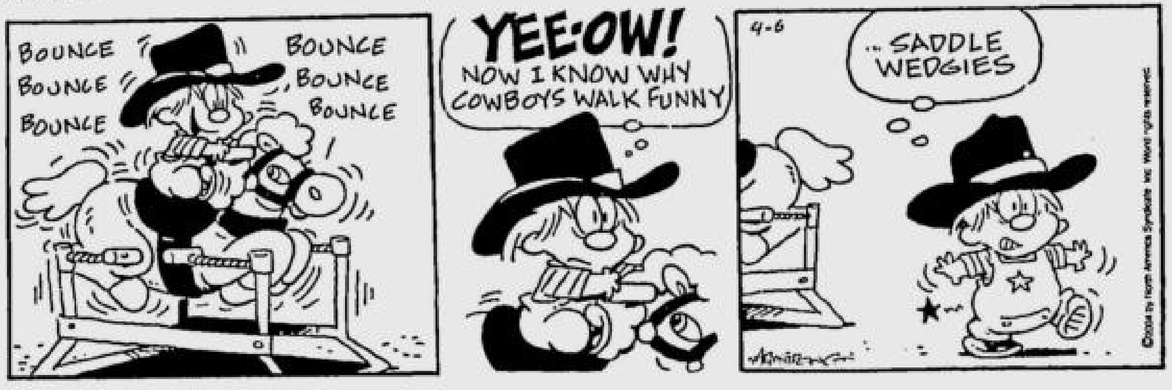
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG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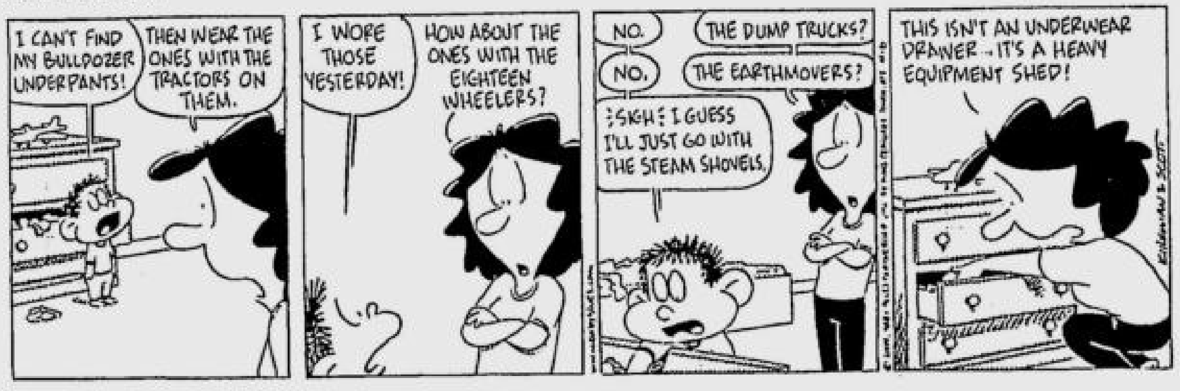
YEE-OW!
NOW I KNOW WHY COWBOYS WALK FUNNY
4-6
.. SADDLE WEDGIES

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I CAN'T FIND MY BULLDOZER UNDERPANTS!
THEN WEAR THE ONES WITH THE TRACTORS ON THEM.
I WORE THOSE YESTERDAY!
HOW ABOUT THE ONES WITH THE EIGHTEEN WHEELERS?
NO.
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NO.
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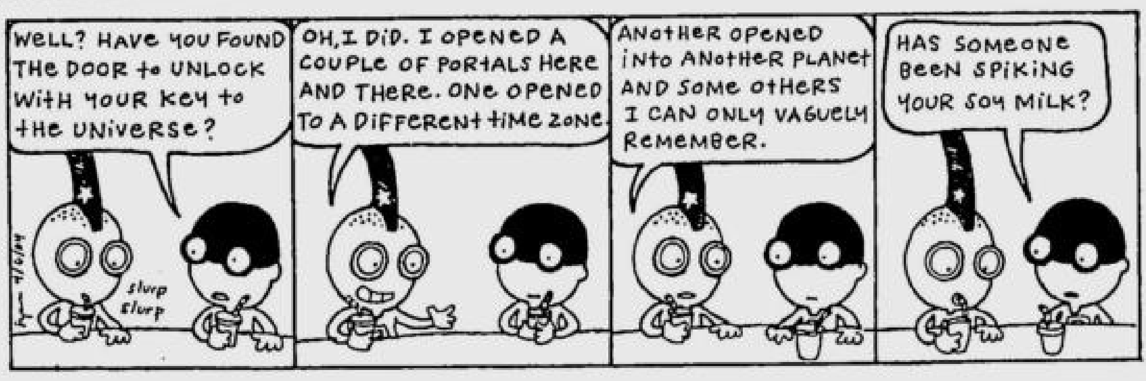
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WELL? HAVE YOU FOUND THE DOOR TO UNLOCK WITH YOUR KEY TO THE UNIVERSE?
slurp
slurp
OH, I DID. I OPENED A COUPLE OF PORTALS HERE AND THERE. ONE OPENED TO A DIFFERENT TIME ZONE.
ANOTHER OPENED INTO ANOTHER PLANET AND SOME OTHERS I CAN ONLY VAGUELY REMEMBER.
HAS SOMEONE BEEN SPIKING YOUR SOY MILK?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are bright, original and sometimes almost obsessed with an idea. You have a wonderful imagination. You also have a strong pioneering impulse that leads you to all kinds of experimentation. Personally, you are honest; you will quest for the truth. Expect increased solitude in order to learn something important this year.
Birthdate of: Michelle Phillips, singer/actress; Andre Previn, composer; Paul Rudd, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Yesterday's tension with others seems to subside today. You have a much better handle on what you're doing now. If you owe something to someone, pay it back ; settle your accounts.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): With the Moon opposite your sign today, you have to be more tolerant, patient and cooperative with others. It just works that way. (Don't question it.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You easily get the cooperation of others now (especially those at work). Because you're easily charming and energetic today, people will respond to you!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Secret flirtations might give this day a lift. You feel a bit saucy and playful. You're in the mood for a good time. (It's a good day to catch a movie or enjoy the arts.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Make plans to entertain at home, or invite someone over today. You feel friendly and especially interested in group activities. Be hospitable, and see what happens.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day for shopping, negotiating, making business deals and buying and selling things. Attend to errands. It's a busy day, but you'll get a lot done!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Check your bank account. You might as well check that sugar jar or teapot where you hide your money as well. Establish what you have and what you don't have.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): The Moon is in your sign today! This gives you a tiny (but it's there) advantage over everyone else. Use this however you can. Consider it an opportunity.

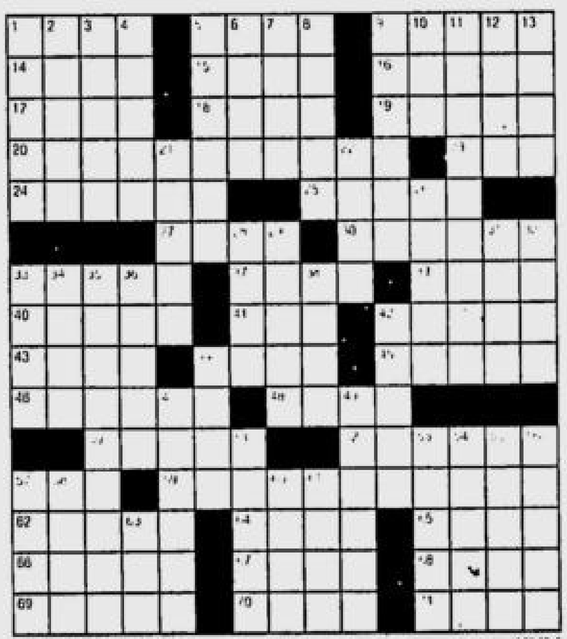
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Some of you have been partying, involved in romantic situations or involved with children. This is exhausting. Try to steal some sweet solitude for yourself today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): A female friend might be a comfort to you today. This person might offer a shoulder to cry on or simply be a source of laughter and fun.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Whatever you do today, you will be noticed more than usual. Keep this in mind before you sound off at anyone! People are watching.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Try to do something that is a bit unusual or out of the ordinary today. Break your routine. Visit different stores or restaurants. Take a different route home from work. You need a change!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY
4/6/04

ACROSS
1 Oscillates a tail
5 Those opposed
9 Pats a baby on the back
14 Actress Raines
15 Assumed a reclining position
16 Going on
17 Dash
18 Cogito __ sum
19 Empirical philosopher
20 Footwear on horseback?
23 Plunk starter?
24 College paper
25 Outline
27 Road shoulder
30 Blot
33 Cavalryman's weapon
37 Right on maps
39 Uncommon
40 Actress Verdugo
41 Rx approvers
42 Field measures
43 "On Golden __"
44 Russian ruler
45 Gets under control
46 Safe
48 Complex silicate
50 Bank robbery
52 Seer
57 Block up
59 Bird perched at the bar?
62 Wipe out
64 Shawl or cloak
65 Glorify
66 Broadcaster
67 Actress Campbell
68 Cicero's being
69 Gardening tools
70 Skyrocket
71 __ off (annoyed)

DOWN
1 Smallest Scotsman
2 God of Islam
3 Forest space
4 Smooths wood
5 John of Monty Python
6 Rowers
7 Close by, old-style
8 Honker
9 Fragrant substance
10 ET's vehicle
11 Support piece on a swaying seat?
12 Hit with a finger
13 End of the road?
21 Zodiac sign
22 Formerly, formerly
26 About
28 Umps' cohorts
29 Lady's address
31 Native people of Canada
32 Shell rival
33 Numidian serpent
34 Shaving-cream additive
35 Initials carved on a seat?
36 Transfuse
38 Indian wear
42 Video-game company
44 Try out
47 Stair parts
49 Slangy officer
51 Burgs
53 Lace tip
54 Type of fire?
55 Parasitic pest
56 Brought to a close
57 Letter starter
58 Opera highlight
60 Nabisco cookie
61 Molten rock
63 Observe

Monday's Puzzle Solved

B	O	M	B	■	A	N	N	E	■	A	T	L	A	S
A	L	O	E	■	R	O	I	L	■	D	R	I	N	K
L	I	A	R	■	E	R	G	S	■	D	I	N	K	Y
L	O	N	G	I	N	T	H	E	T	O	O	T	H	■
■	■	■	■	N	A	H	■	■	E	N	S	■	■	■
F	A	C	E	T	S	■	E	O	N	S	■	T	A	P
A	B	A	S	E	■	K	A	N	T	■	S	O	D	A
N	O	S	P	R	I	N	G	C	H	I	C	K	E	N
G	R	E	Y	■	R	O	L	E	■	D	U	E	L	S
S	T	Y	■	S	A	T	E	■	S	Y	D	N	E	Y
■	■	■	A	N	T	■	■	O	W	L	■	■	■	■
■	A	N	C	I	E	N	T	H	I	S	T	O	R	Y
S	L	O	O	P	■	O	R	A	L	■	A	S	E	A
U	S	U	R	P	■	E	A	R	L	■	C	L	A	W
B	O	N	N	Y	■	L	Y	E	S	■	T	O	R	N

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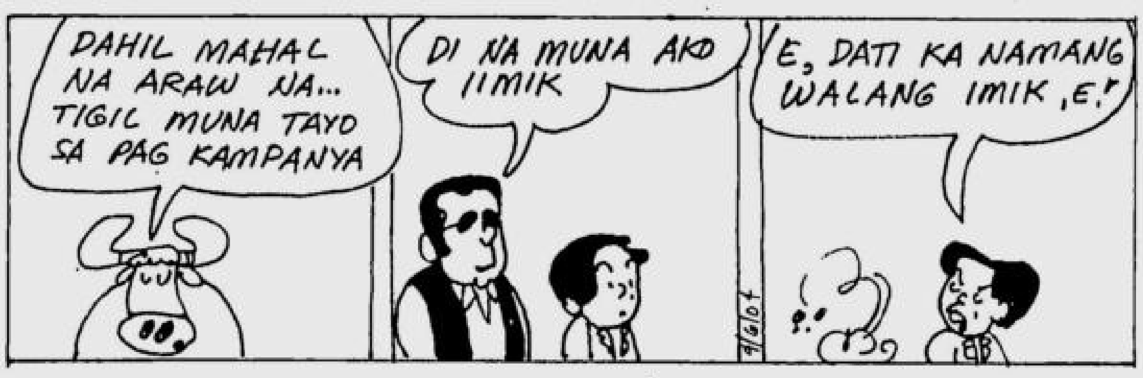
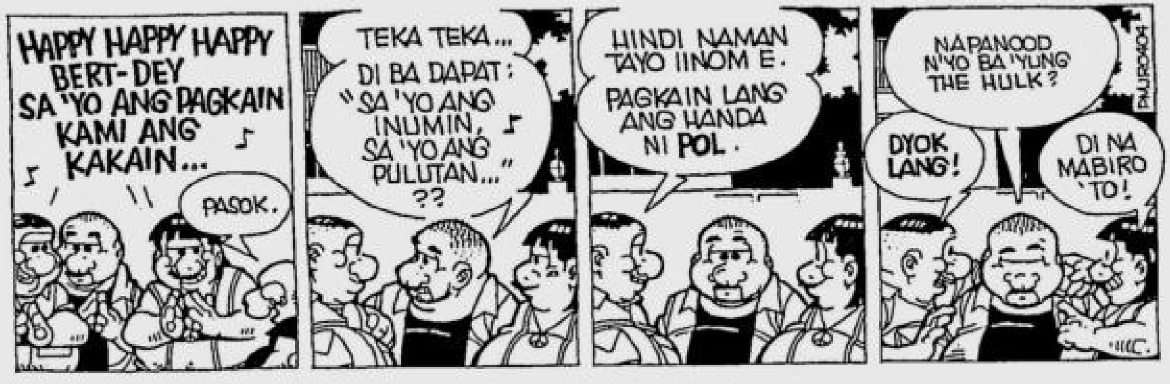
4/6/04

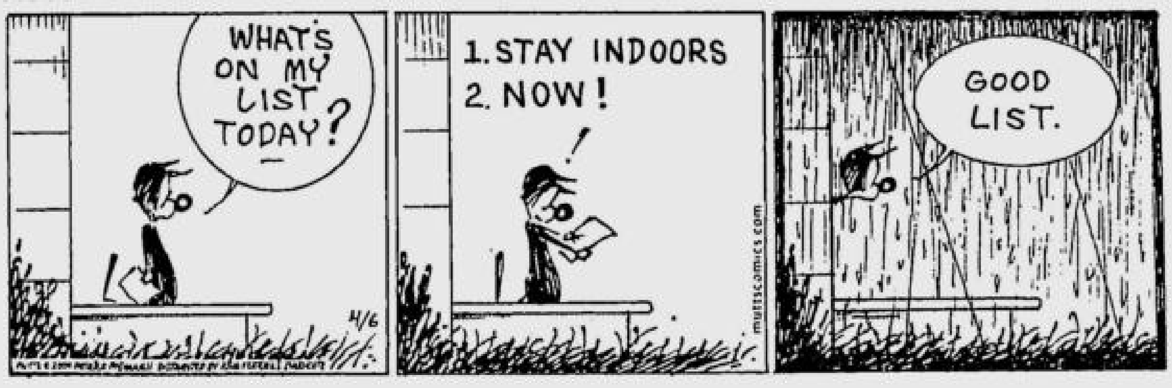
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


DAHIL MAHAL NA ARAW NA... TIGIL MUNA TAYO SA PAG KAMPANYA
DI NA MUNA AKO IIMIK
4/6/04
E, DATI KA NAMANG WALANG IMIK, E!

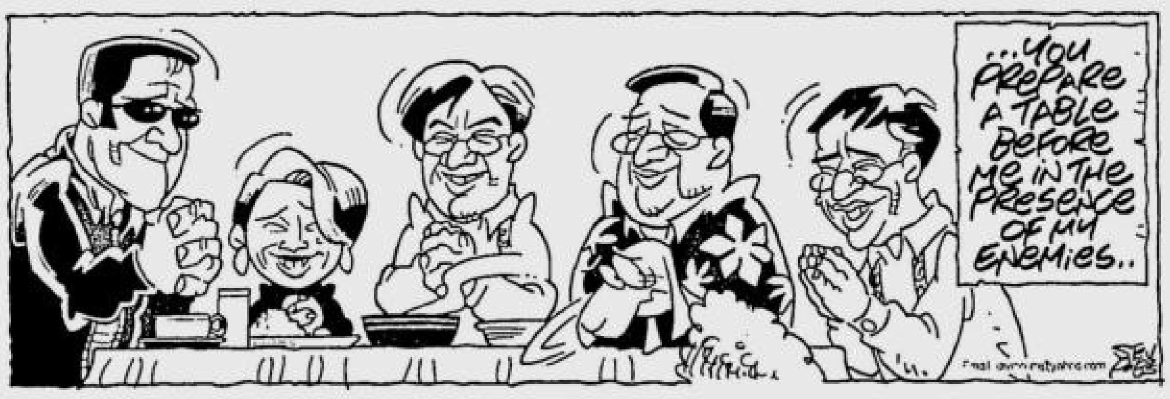
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY BERT-DEY SA 'YO ANG PAGKAIN KAMI ANG KAKAIN...
PASOK.
TEKA TEKA... DI BA DAPAT: "SA 'YO ANG INUMIN, SA 'YO ANG PULUTAN..." ??
HINDI NAMAN TAYO IINOM E. PAGKAIN LANG ANG HANDA NI POL.
NAPANOOD N'YO BA 'YUNG THE HULK?
DYOK LANG!
DI NA MABIRO 'TO!

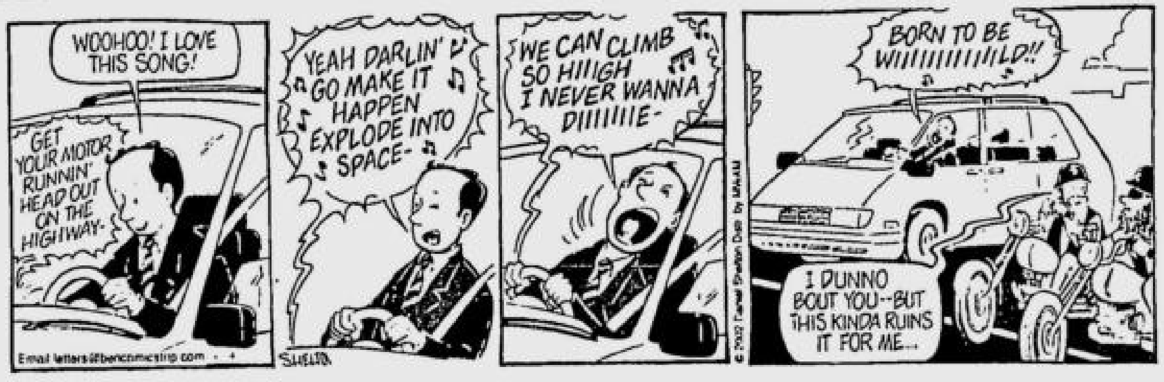
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S ON MY LIST TODAY?
4/6
1. STAY INDOORS
2. NOW!
!
muttscomics.com
GOOD LIST.

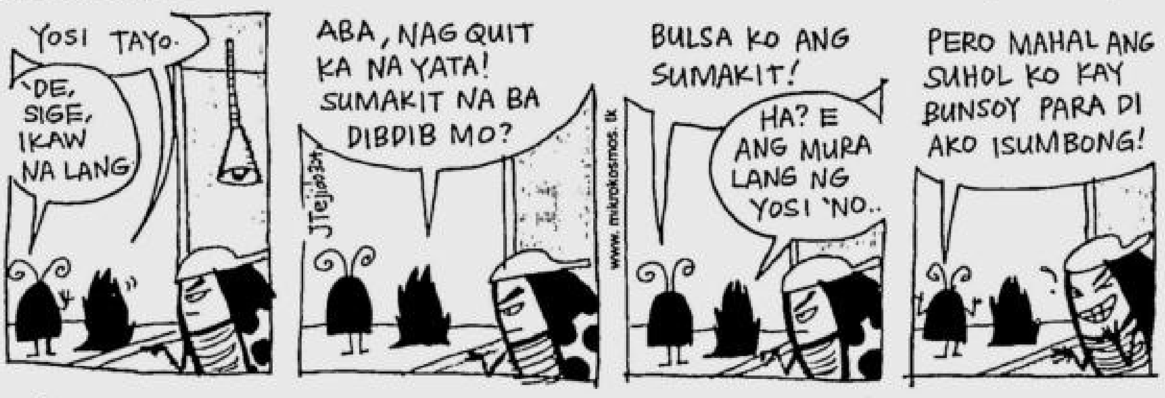
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


...YOU PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES..

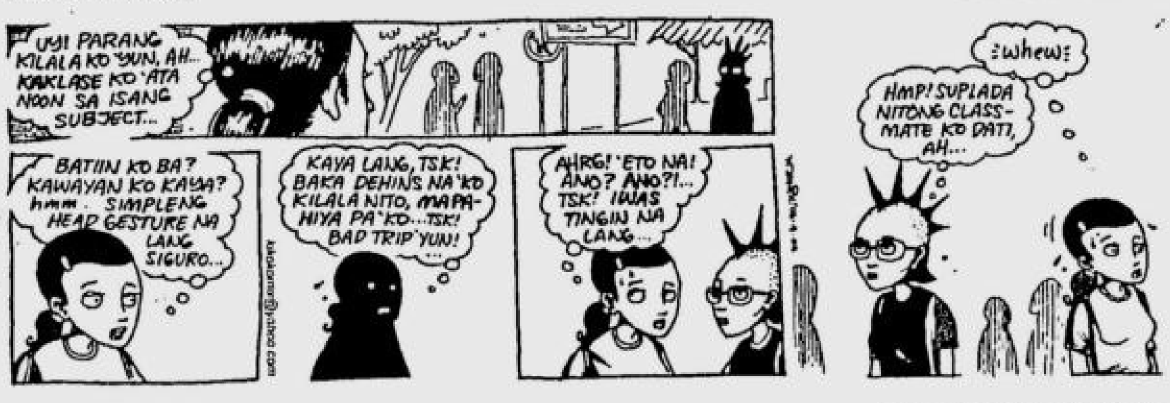
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


WOOHOO! I LOVE THIS SONG!
GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNIN' HEAD OUT ON THE HIGHWAY-
YEAH DARLIN' GO MAKE IT HAPPEN EXPLODE INTO SPACE-
WE CAN CLIMB SO HIIIGH I NEVER WANNA DIIIIIIE-
BORN TO BE WIIIIIIIIIILD!!
I DUNNO BOUT YOU--BUT THIS KINDA RUINS IT FOR ME...

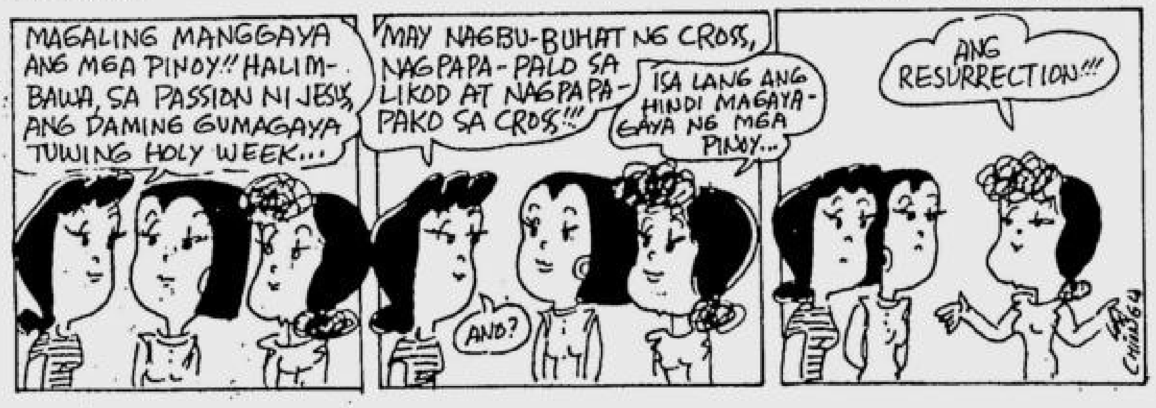
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


YOSI TAYO.
DE, SIGE, IKAW NA LANG
ABA, NAG QUIT KA NA YATA! SUMAKIT NA BA DIBDIB MO?
www.mikrokosmos.tk
BULSA KO ANG SUMAKIT!
HA? E ANG MURA LANG NG YOSI 'NO..
PERO MAHAL ANG SUHOL KO KAY BUNSOY PARA DI AKO ISUMBONG!

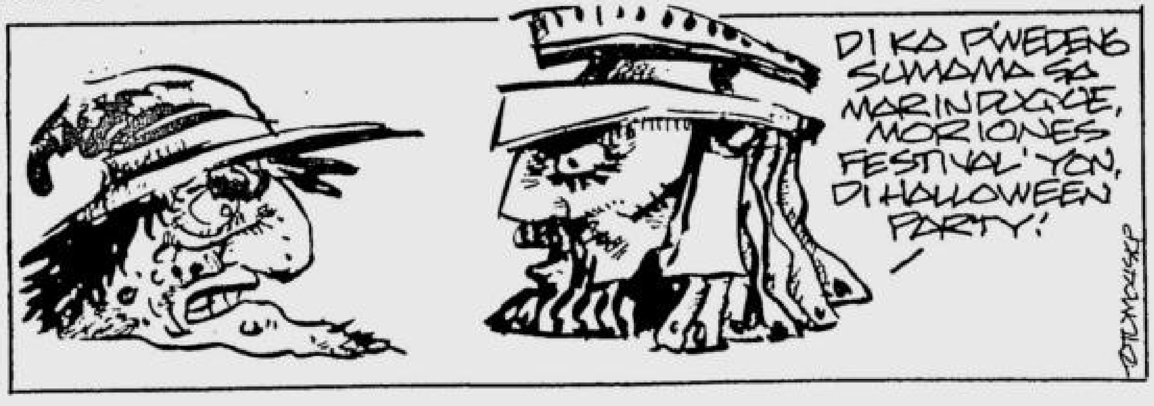
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


UYI PARANG KILALA KO 'YUN, AH... KAKLASE KO 'ATA NOON SA ISANG SUBJECT...
BATIIN KO BA? KAWAYAN KO KAYA? hmm.. SIMPLENG HEAD GESTURE NA LANG SIGURO...
KAYA LANG, TSK! BAKA DEHINS NA 'KO KILALA NITO, MAPAHIYA PA 'KO...TSK! BAD TRIP 'YUN!
AHRG! 'ETO NA! ANO? ANO?!... TSK! IWAS TINGIN NA LANG...
HMP! SUPLADA NITONG CLASSMATE KO DATI, AH...
whew

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MAGALING MANGGAYA ANG MGA PINOY!! HALIMBAWA, SA PASSION NI JESUS, ANG DAMING GUMAGAYA TUWING HOLY WEEK...
MAY NAGBU-BUHAT NG CROSS, NAGPAPA-PALO SA LIKOD AT NAGPAPA-PAKO SA CROSS!!!
ANO?
ISA LANG ANG HINDI MAGAYA-GAYA NG MGA PINOY...
ANG RESURRECTION!!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DI KO P'WEDENG SUMAMA SA MARINDUQUE, MORIONES FESTIVAL 'YON, DI HALLOWEEN PARTY!

Maksim live at CCP

PIANO sensation Maksim, who performs classical music in a new and exciting way, will have a concert at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on April 20.

The CCP show, "Maksim Asian Tour 2004 Live in Manila," is the third leg of a seven-country Asian swing that will kick off in Seoul on April 15 and end in Hong Kong on May 2. The other stops are Taiwan, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Jakarta.

SHOW TIME

Ticket prices to Maksim's Manila show are P3,000, P2,200, P1,800 and P1,300, available at Ticketworld at major National Bookstore branches, selected Robinson's department stores, Tower Records in Makati and Alabang, Glorietta I cinema, Greenbelt cinema, and the CCP box office.

Call 891-999 or log on to www.ticketworld.com.ph for inquiries.

Maksim first gained the attention of music lovers worldwide with "Gestures," his best-selling album of contemporary Croatian piano pieces.

Maksim was born in 1975 in Sibanik, a Croatian town on the Adriatic coast. He began taking piano lessons at the age of 9. Five years later, he performed Haydn's C major piano concerto with an orchestra.

He continued to play despite the outbreak of the Kosovo war in 1990. In 1993, he won his first major competition, in Zagreb.

He studied for five years at the Music Academy in Zagreb, and for one year at the Fenene Liszt Conservatory in Budapest, where he won first prize in the 1999 Rubenstein International Piano Competition.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 5	PETER PAN
Ali 6	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
Ali 7	OTSO OTSO

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL

Open Daily 4 PM to 10 PM

ARANETA COLISEUM

APR 8	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
APR 9	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
APR 10	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (2PM)
APR 11	PBA: FED EX VS. RED BULL
APR 13	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 14	PBA: PUREFOODS VS. RED BULL
APR 15	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 16	REWIND PLUS DOBLE REVO DOUBLE PREMYO
APR 17	18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LORD'S FLOCK

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	KASIPING
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	KARIBAL
CINEMA-3	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HAUNTED OFFICE
CINEMA-6	GRUDGE 2
CINEMA-7	TORQUE
CINEMA-8	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OR THE CHRIST
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-12	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-14	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
CINEMA-15	50 FIRST DATES

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	THE CURSE
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-4	[illegible]

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	[illegible]
CINEMA-4	[illegible]

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972
RESERVED SEATING
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

OPEN ON APRIL 8 and 9
(Thursday & Friday)

1	PETER PAN	11:20, 1:40, 4:00 6:20, 8:40, 10:55	GP
2	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30	PG-13
3	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30	PG-13
4	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00	PG-13

THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS

a landmark reinvented!

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 — **PASSION OF THE CHRIST**
10:50, 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:50
P13

CINEMA 2 — **PASSION OF THE CHRIST**
11:20, 2:05, 4:50, 7:35, 10:30
P13

Special screening of PASSION OF THE CHRIST on Holy Thursday.

Advance ticket purchase for PASSION OF THE CHRIST is also available. • 722 4496
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

MUSIC MUSEUM

APR. 2 & 3 "MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL" 8:00PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440–41

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	PETER PAN GP 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

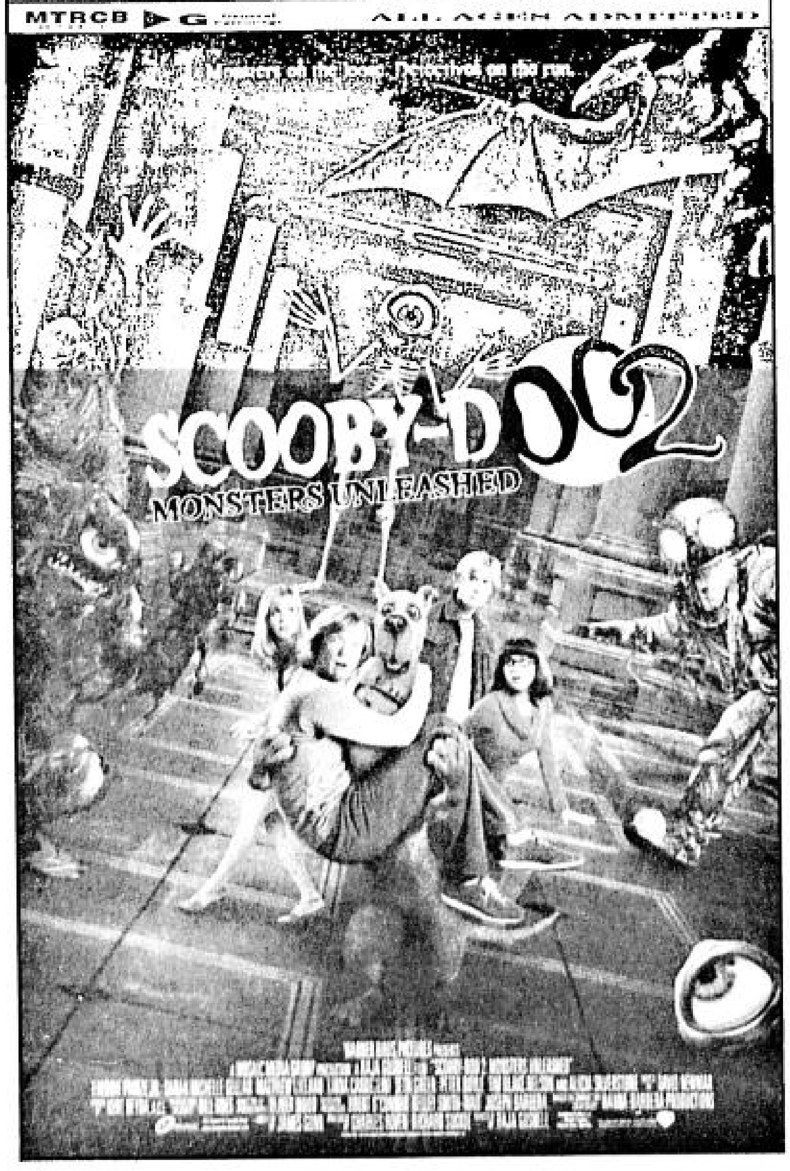
IT'S POWER PLANT'S EASTER EGG HUNT ON APRIL 11!
A P500 PURCHASE AT ANY STORE ENTITLES YOU TO SIGN UP ONE CHILD.
THERE ARE ONLY 250 SLOTS, SO HOP TO IT!
PRE-REGISTRATION IS FROM APRIL 1-7

POWER PLANT MALL
AT ROCKWELL

Tricks & Moves
The Special Events Co.

NOW SHOWING

MTRCB G ALL AGES ADMITTED


Monsters on the loose. Detectives on the run.
SCOOBY-DOO 2
MONSTERS UNLEASHED

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

MOVIEWORLD

635-5555

TOP MOVIE THEATER

Annual National Consumer's Quality Award 2003
Family Consumers Choice Award 2003

NOW SHOWING

GALLERIA
632-9115 to 16 / 687-0593

CINEMA 1 THX — **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30

2 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
3 **PETER PAN** Sneak Preview 10:15, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45
4 **50 FIRST DATES** 11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
5 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 10:50, 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
6 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
7 **SCOOBY DOO 2** 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40
8 **LOVE ACTUALLY** 10:40, 1:25, 4:10, 6:55, 9:40
9 **HOUSE OF THE DEAD** 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30
10 **THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT** 11:10, 1:30, 3:50, 6:10, 8:30, 10:30

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA
526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 10:00
2 **SCOOBY DOO 2** 10:15, 12:10, 2:05, 4:00, 5:55, 7:50, 9:50
3 **50 FIRST DATES** 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
4 **HOUSE OF THE DEAD** 11:05, 1:10, 3:15, 5:20, 7:45, 9:40
5 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 10:30, 1:10, 3:50, 6:30, 9:20
6 **PETER PAN** Sneak Preview 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:40
7 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 10:30, 1:10, 3:50, 6:30, 9:20

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST
682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 **HOUSE OF THE DEAD** 11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10
2 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 11:55, 2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35
3 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 11:55, 2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35
4 **50 FIRST DATES** 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
5 **SCOOBY DOO 2** 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 8:50
6 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 12:35, 3:15, 5:55, 8:35
7 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 12:35, 3:15, 5:55, 8:35
8 **PETER PAN** Sneak Preview 1:05, 3:45, 6:35, 9:05

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW
935-3229 / 31

1 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 10:10, 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50
2 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 10:10, 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50
3 **HOUSE OF THE DEAD** 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00
4 **OTSO-OTSO** 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
5 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 11:30, 2:10, 4:50, 7:30
6 **SCOOBY DOO 2** 11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
7 **50 FIRST DATES** 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:10
8 **PETER PAN** Sneak Preview 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON
288-0985/2575

1 PETER PAN Sneak Preview
2 OTSO-OTSO
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

big Supercenter CAINTA
240-4661

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 OTSO-OTSO
3 PETER PAN Sneak Preview
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA
Laguna (049)837-0907

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE CURSE
3 PETER PAN, Sneak Preview
4 THE GRUDGE 2
5 HIDALGO

Big R Supercenter LIPA
757-3664 / 312-5870

1 50 FIRST DATES
2 OTSO-OTSO
3 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
4 KARIBAL
5 SCOOBY DOO 2

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS
852-2125

1 SCOOBY DOO 2
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 OTSO-OTSO
5 50 FIRST DATES

Big R Supercenter STARMILLS
San Fernando Pampanga
875-1927 / 961-5270

1 50 FIRST DATES
2 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 THE NIGHTMARE
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST THX

IMUS
471-8188 / 875-5858

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 OTSO-OTSO
6 PETER PAN Sneak Preview

BACOLOD
441-0458/59

1 TORQUE
2 HIDALGO
3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 GOTHIKA
5 SCOOBY DOO 2
6 OTSO-OTSO

ILOILO
336-8070/78

1 TORQUE
2 GOTHIKA
3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 THE NIGHTMARE
5 BONE SNATCHER
6 SCOOBY DOO 2

THE PASSION

See it at its BEST

House of the Dead

at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

SOON TO OPEN!!!

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ABS clarifies 'overworked, underpaid' issue

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

JUST when I was about to get the side of ABS-CBN regarding the "overworked and underpaid" grievances of their staff, I got an e-mail from one of the network's bigwigs, which I am printing below in the spirit of fairness.

I leave it to you to figure out if the disgruntled staff members are simply a noisy minority or if the executives are being downright defensive.

Dear Ms Carvajal,

This is in reaction to your column Dolly Wood which appeared in the Entertainment section of Philippine Daily Inquirer on March 30, 2004.

In the spirit of fair journalism, please allow me to make several clarifications on some points,in the interest of providing your readers with the other side of the story.

For the record, the professional fees of ABS-CBN segment producers and writers are very competitive and within the industry standards. The professional fees you quoted in your column represent weekly or episodic rates and not monthly rates as perceived by your readers. Also, the segment producers and writers are given the option to further demonstrate their skills and abilities by being assigned to not just one but several programs in the network, and are given a separate remuneration per program.

Other than their regular salary, they also receive additional benefits, which are actually more than what the law requires, from the network.

Furthermore, the segment producer's compensation level is established based on his/her level of competency, expertise, experience and actual performance.

We hope that you will publish our side for the sake of fair journalism.

Very truly yours,
Maloli-Espinosa Manalastas, Vice President, Government, Corporate Affairs and Public Relations

Just asking

NOW that Kris Aquino is seeing Mark Lapid, could it be true that Joey Marquez's new paramour is Francine Prieto? But some quarters insist that the controversial couple is still on and being linked to others is just a cover-up. It ain't over till it's over so they're running for cover!

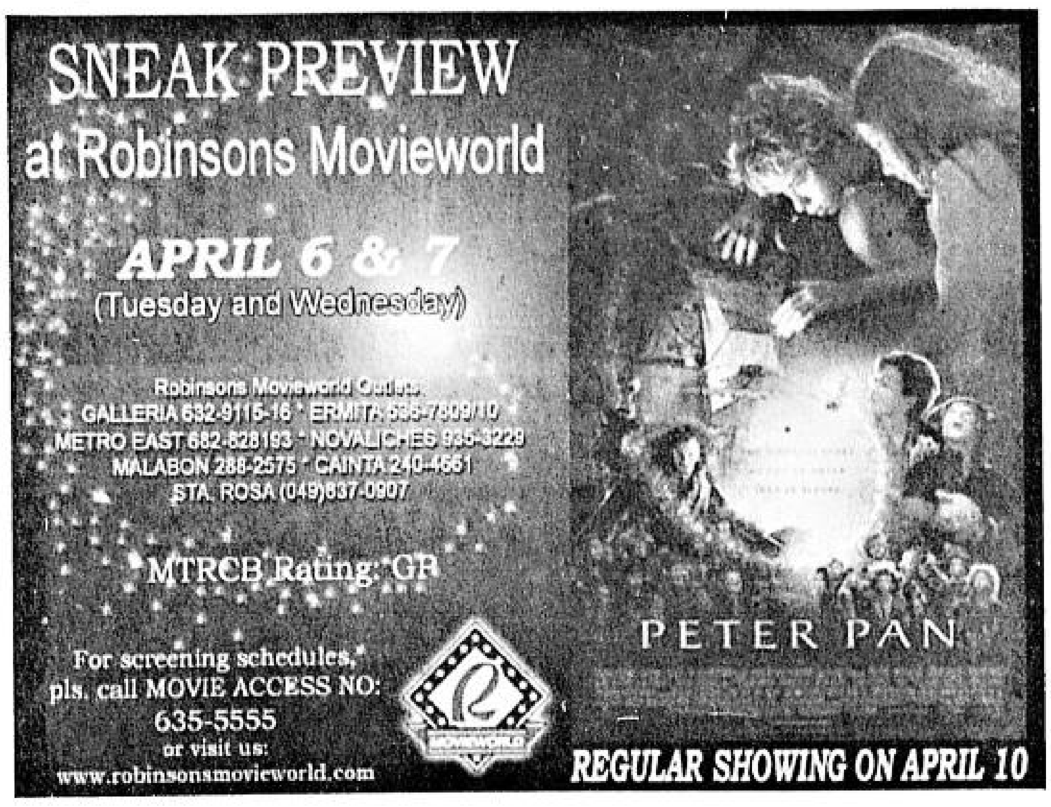
* * *

Is it true that concert producer Joed Serrano was ordered to leave the venue where Vanness Wu's Cebu concert was held because the Taiwanese pop superstar got peeved at how Joed was acting so chummy with him? But how come Joed made it appear that he's had enough of the F4 mania so he left in a huff?

* * *

THE VIVA Hot Males VCD sold 5,000 copies in just two days and the studs are getting indecent proposals left and right from gays and matrons.

For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com



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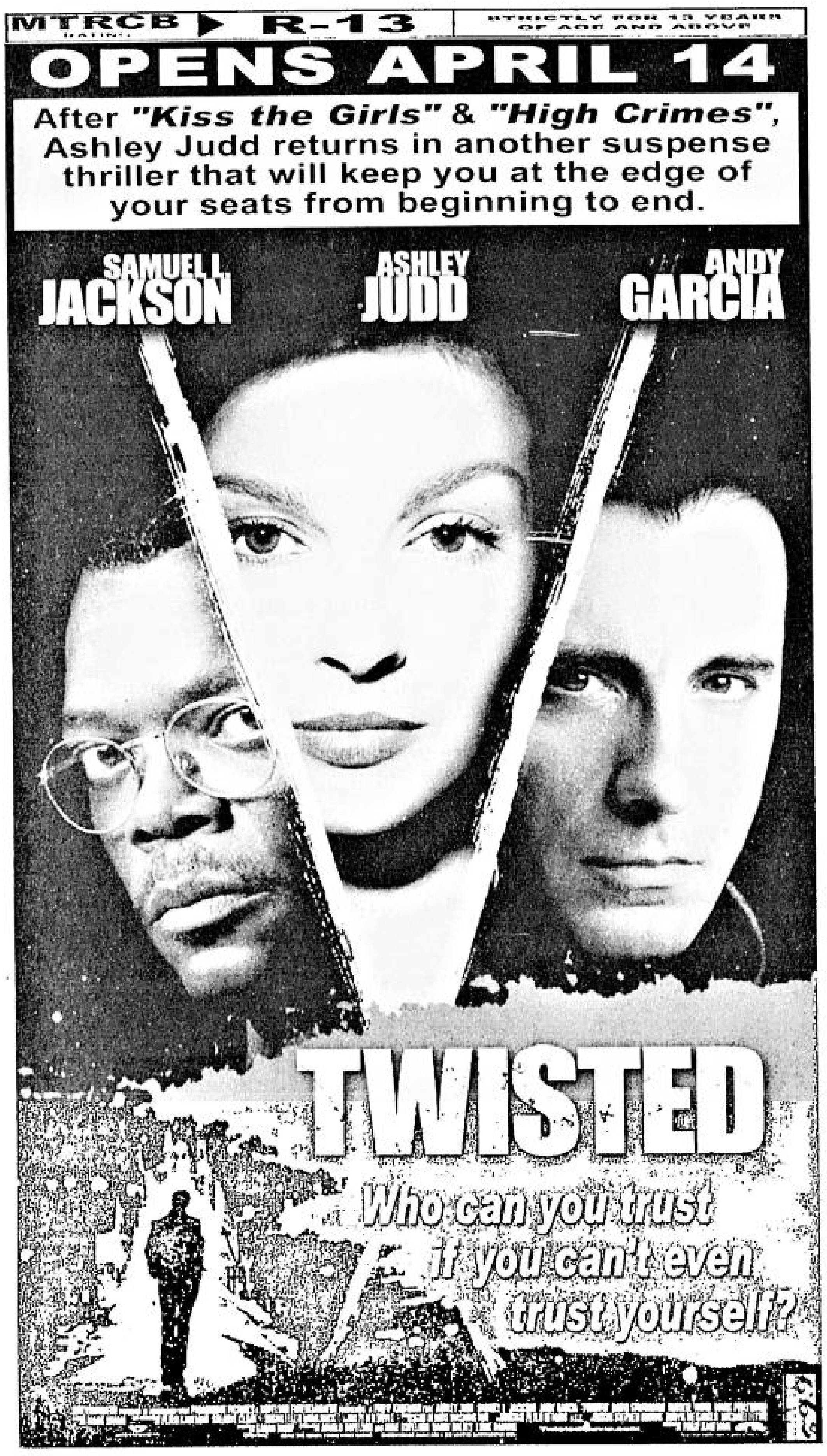
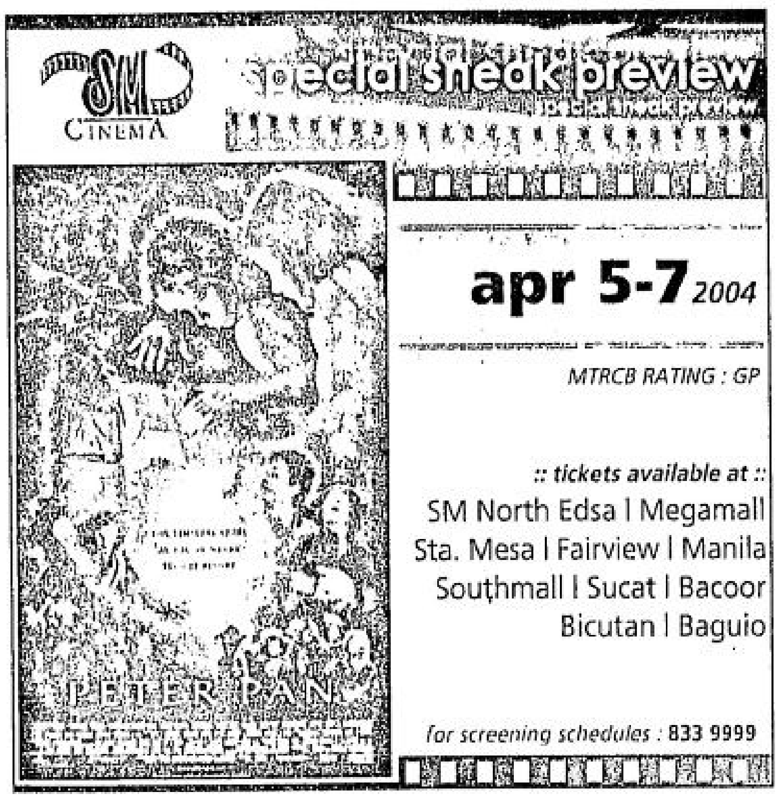
PETER PAN
REGULAR SHOWING ON APRIL 10



MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
OPENS APRIL 14
After *"Kiss the Girls"* & *"High Crimes"*, Ashley Judd returns in another suspense thriller that will keep you at the edge of your seats from beginning to end.
SAMUEL L. JACKSON
ASHLEY JUDD
ANDY GARCIA
TWISTED
Who can you trust if you can't even trust yourself?



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PETER PAN
apr 5-7 2004
MTRCB RATING : GP
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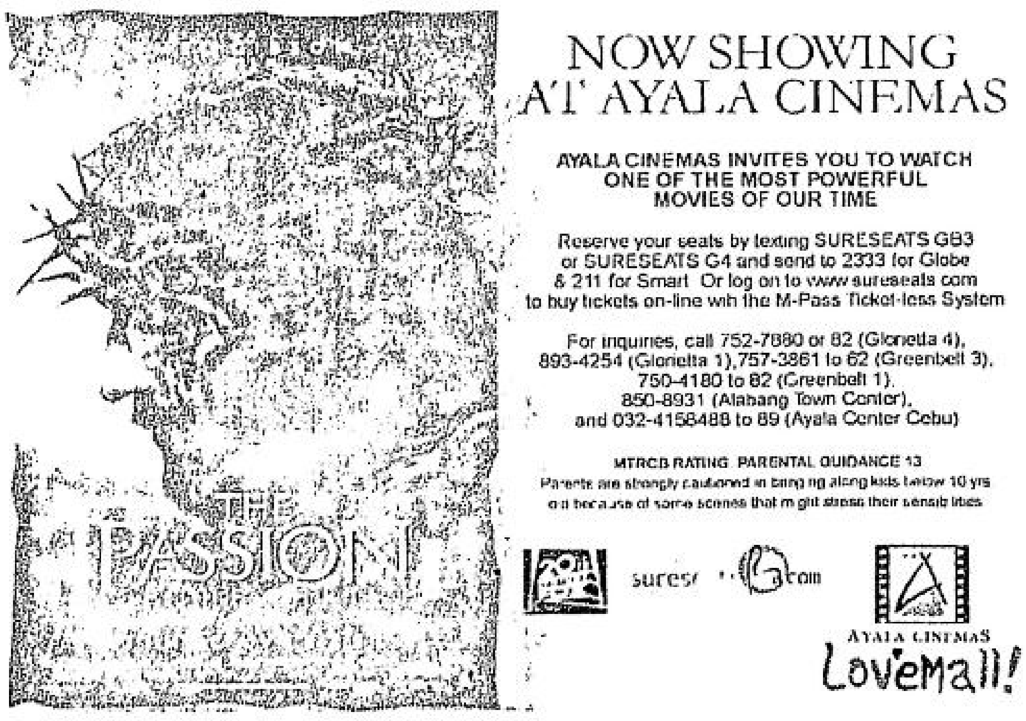
for screening schedules : 833 9999

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
SASAPIAN KA NG MULTO SA *ABRIL 10.*
Wala pang mas nakakasindak dito!
the ghost is invited to dinner at your house.
the Uninvited
Jeon Ji-Hyun
(the star of My Sassy Girl)
Park Shin-Yang
MAGIC 89.9



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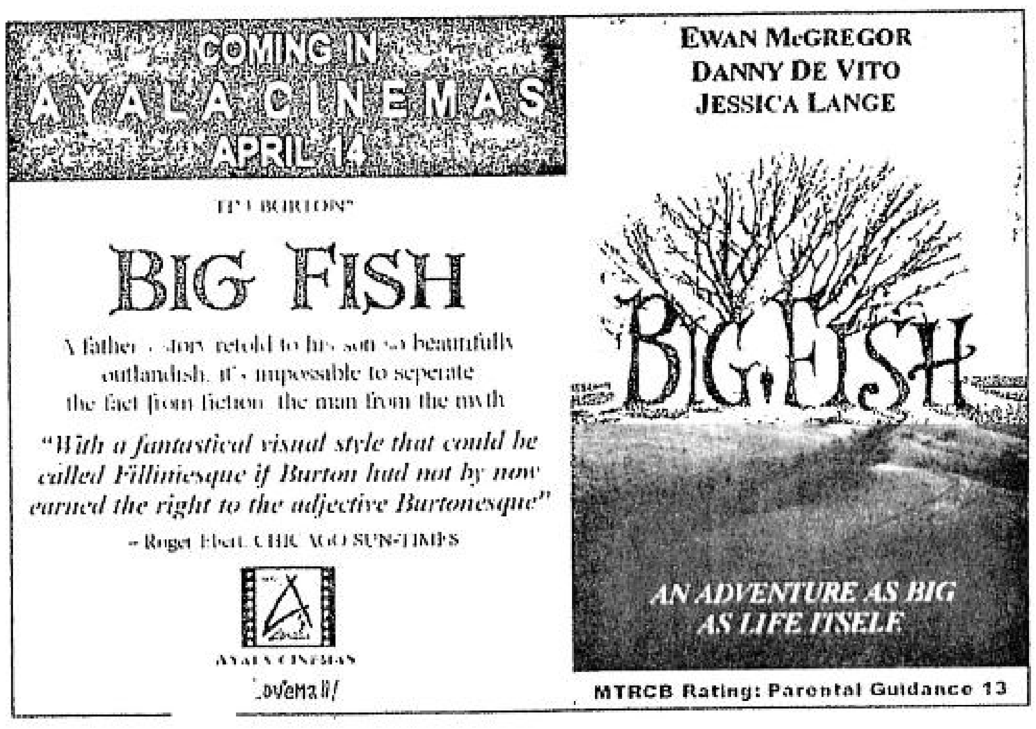
MTRCB RATING: PARENTAL GUIDANCE 13
Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below 10 yrs old because of some scenes that might stress their sensibilities
AYALA CINEMAS
Lov'eMall!



COMING IN AYALA CINEMAS APRIL 14
TIM BURTON'S
BIG FISH
A father's story retold to his son so beautifully outlandish, it's impossible to seperate the fact from fiction, the man from the myth
"With a fantastical visual style that could be called Filliniesque if Burton had not by now earned the right to the adjective Burtonesque"
– Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
AYALA CINEMAS
Lov'eMall!
EWAN McGREGOR
DANNY DE VITO
JESSICA LANGE
BIG FISH
AN ADVENTURE AS BIG AS LIFE ITSELF
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

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"The Best Family Film Of The Year!"
CBS-TV
SPECIAL ADVANCE SCREENINGS
of the timeless story as you've never seen it before at
the all-digital-sound
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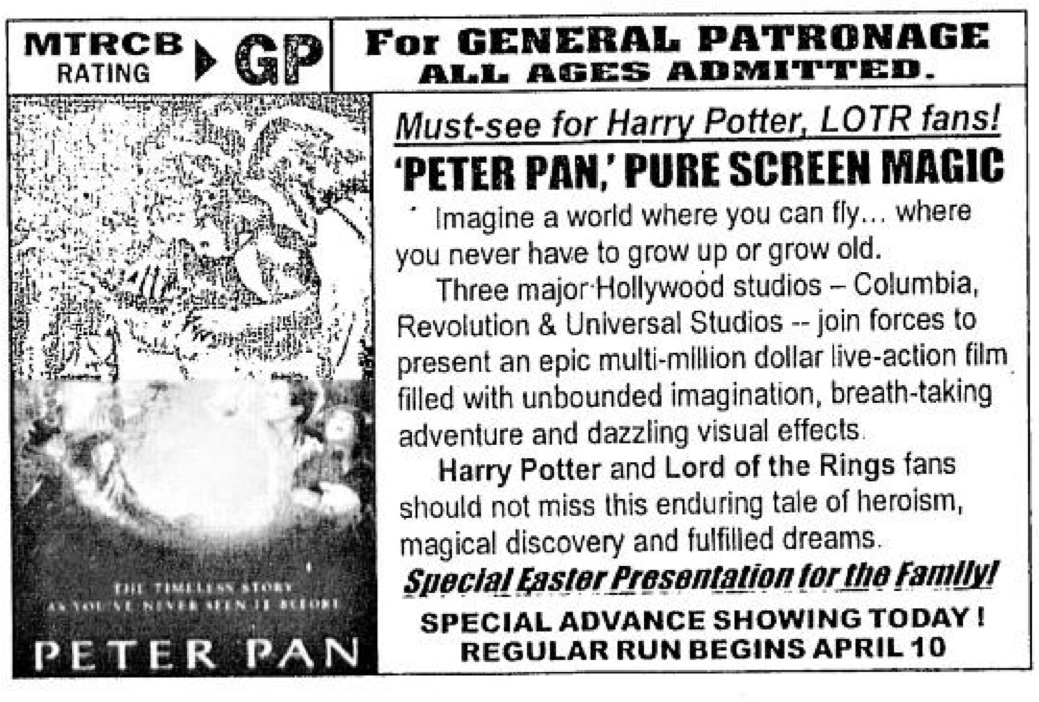
Or log on to www.sureseats.com to buy tickets on-line with the M-Pass Ticket-less System.
MTRCB Rating: General Patronage
AYALA CINEMAS
Lov'eMall!



MTRCB RATING ▶ GP For GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED.
THE TIMELESS STORY AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE
PETER PAN
Must-see for Harry Potter, LOTR fans!
'PETER PAN,' PURE SCREEN MAGIC
Imagine a world where you can fly... where you never have to grow up or grow old.
Three major Hollywood studios – Columbia, Revolution & Universal Studios -- join forces to present an epic multi-million dollar live-action film filled with unbounded imagination, breath-taking adventure and dazzling visual effects.
Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings fans should not miss this enduring tale of heroism, magical discovery and fulfilled dreams.
Special Easter Presentation for the Family!
SPECIAL ADVANCE SHOWING TODAY !
REGULAR RUN BEGINS APRIL 10

'Daisies' are not for plucking

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

SOME weeks ago, we were in a can and heard the Kinse Años commercial on the radio. In the spot, a wife was berating her husband for coming home late after what she took to be hours of being entertained by a sexy 15-year-old. Only at the end was it made clear that what was being talked about was a liquor brand.

Right off the bat, we sensed that there was something wrong with the "naughty" commercial. Thus, we weren't surprised when, sometime later, some women's groups complained about the liquor brand's advertising thrust, both on radio and on billboards.

In time, even the CBCP and some men with teenage daughters joined the fray, and so did the Ad Board. But the liquor's makers refused to buckle under, even when it was pointed out that the ad campaign encouraged some Filipino men's propensity for exploiting nymphets.

The stand-off became more heated when the owners stressed that the billboards didn't show any young women or anything visually sexy, only the "teasing" tag line.

But this didn't placate the ad campaign's critics, who said that the tag line itself connoted an exploitative macho attitude that shouldn't be encouraged.

To further complicate the issue, it was revealed that the furor over the ad campaign had caused the liquor's sales to increase rather than decline—yet another indication that, in these parts, controversy sells.

But this didn't dissuade the ad campaign's critics. As of this writing, the Department of Justice had already stepped in, requiring the liquor's makers to explain their side, in the light of persistent public opposition.

How will this continuing advertising drama play itself out? Experience teaches us that, in the long run, public opinion eventually holds sway.

Other factors that could be looked into: Aside from the liquor's makers, the ad agency handling the product and the radio stations that ran the "naughty" commercials have also played 2 part, on point of campaign formulation and dissemination. Will they soon find themselves embroiled in the continuing controversy?

The ad campaign's critics vow to continue protesting, but they're frustrated by reports that the controversy they've stirred up has made the liquor brand more "popular." Could they inadvertently be boosting the very product whose advertising thus they find questionable? That's quite an ironic conundrum, indeed!

To maneuver their way around this unexpected complication, they're urging macho men to join the fray, to help dissuade their less enlightened drinking buddies from supporting the unsupportable.

Of course, the real target here isn't the liquor brand, but the abusive attitude that wrongly defines macho-hood in these parts and results in the exploitation of young women.

So, the current controversy could turn out to be a blessing in disguise—if it prompts men to rethink their own benighted attitude regarding the nubile "daisies" that are not theirs for the plucking.

Tribute to National Artists

THE SOUNTRACK OF "Lagi Kitang Mamahalin," the CCP's musical tribute to the country's National Artists, is now available on DVD, VCD and CD.

Conceived as a fundraising effort for the proposed Gallery of National Artists, the concert featured performances by singing stars like **Sharon Cuneta, Regine Velasquez, Anna Fegi, Isay Alvarez** and **Cris Villonco.**

Numbers performed included **Levi Celerio's** "Kahit Konting Pagtingin," **Lucio San Pedro's** "Ugoy ng Duyan," and "Bayan Ko." The recording is produced by the CCP, Escaler & Co. and Viva Entertainment, and distributed by Viva Records.

DID YOU KNOW...

Sexy star-singer **Patricia Javier** spends her money wisely. She is putting up a private resort, which she named Villa Patricia, in Antipolo City in Rizal. According to her plans, the resort opens in the middle of this year.

See the unforgettable photos from the film "MILAN" for exhibit at
Cinema Lobby
MILAN
Fall in Love all over again...
Exhibit Tour Schedule
GALLERIA March 29 - April 4
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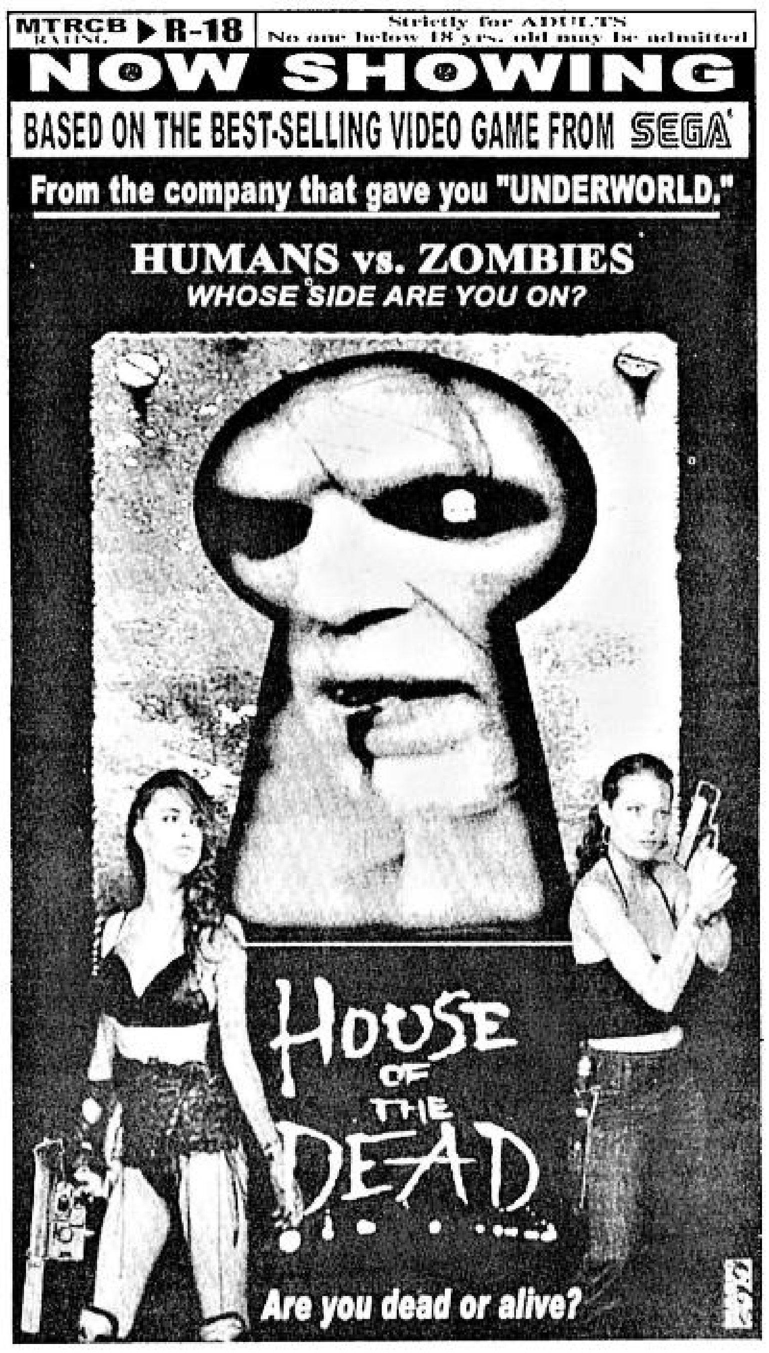
NOVALICHES April 19 - April 25


MTRCB RATING ▶ R-18
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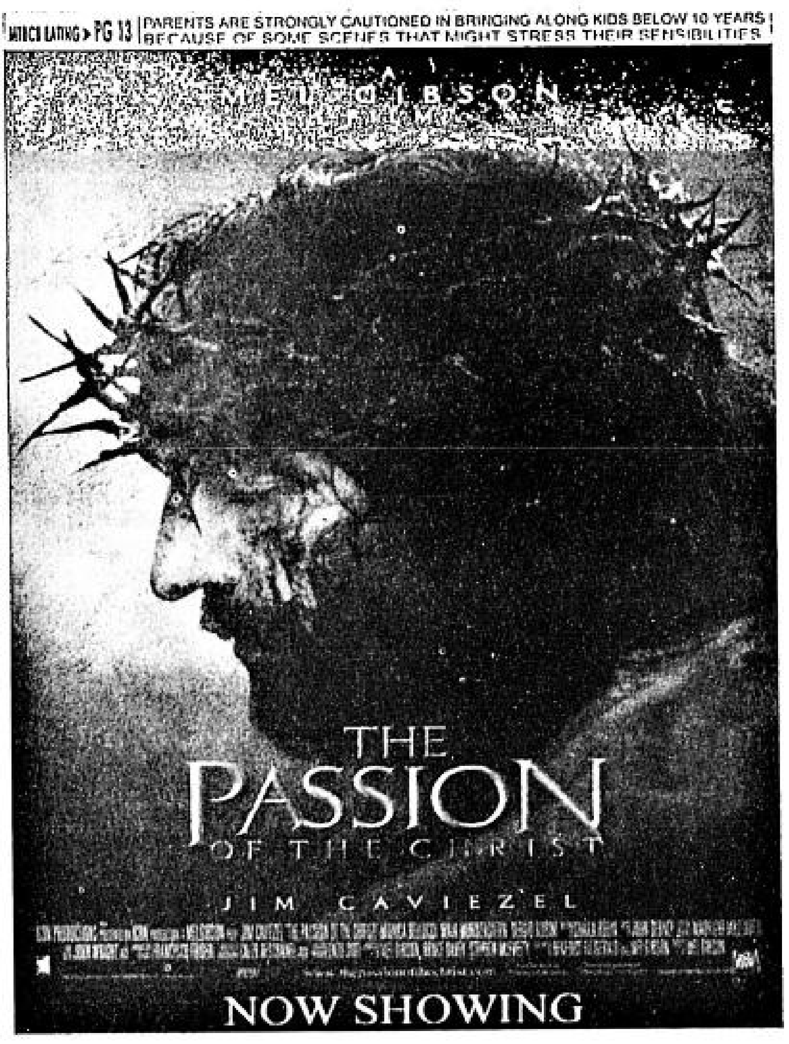
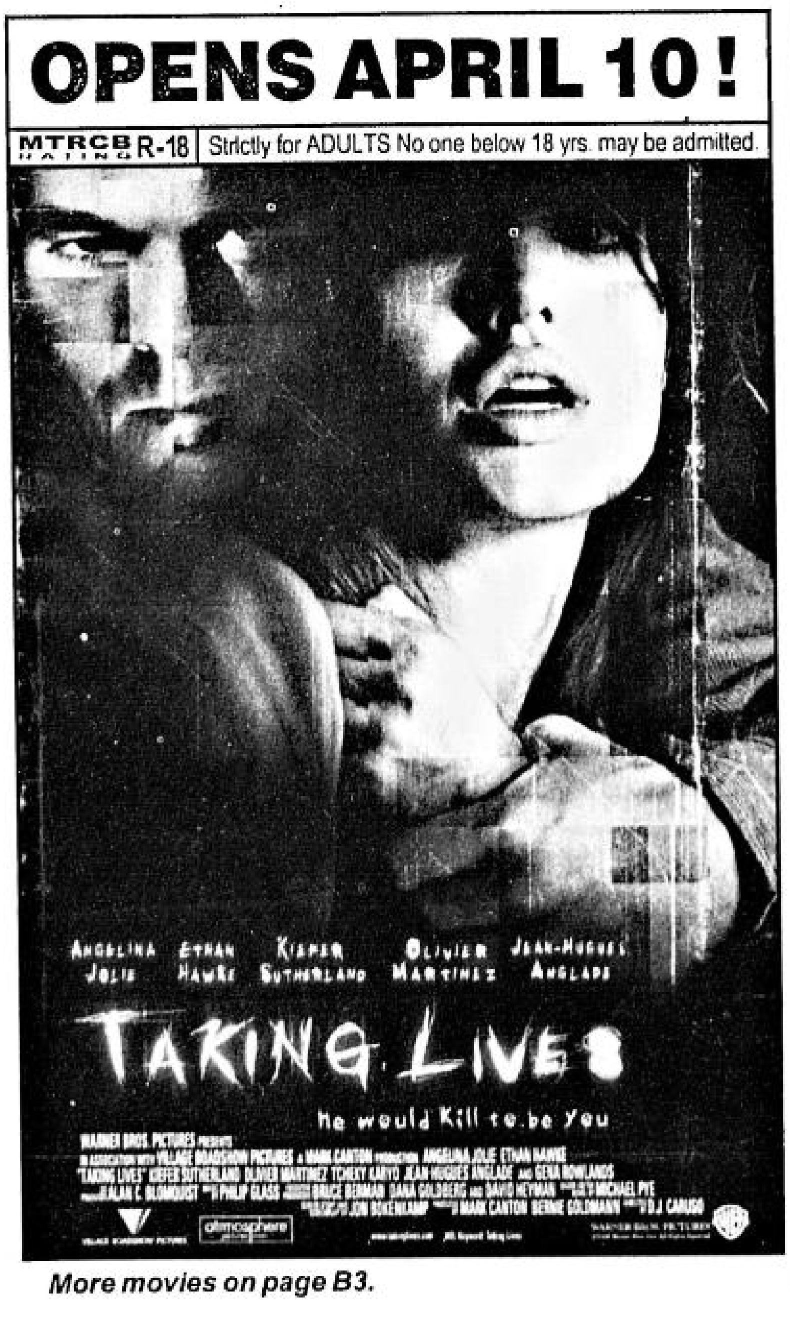
BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING VIDEO GAME FROM SEGA
From the company that gave you "UNDERWORLD."
HUMANS vs. ZOMBIES
WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?
HOUSE OF THE DEAD
Are you dead or alive?


MTRCB RATING ▶ PG 13
PARENTS ARE STRONGLY CAUTIONED IN BRINGING ALONG KIDS BELOW 10 YEARS BECAUSE OF SOME SCENES THAT MIGHT STRESS THEIR SENSIBILITIES
MEL GIBSON
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
JIM CAVIEZEL
NOW SHOWING


OPENS APRIL 10!
MTRCB RATING R-18
Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.
ANGELINA JOLIE
ETHAN HAWKE
KIEFER SUTHERLAND
OLIVIER MARTINEZ
JEAN-HUGUES ANGLADE
TAKING LIVES
he would Kill to be You
WARNER BROS. PICTURES

More movies on page B3.

"A TERRIFIC ACTION ACHIEVEMENT. ANDY AND LARRY WACHOWSKI HAVE CONCLUDED THEIR TRILOGY WITH ALL BARRELS BLAZING."
– Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
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Editor Louie C. Camino

'SING-GALING' CHANGES

'Sweet' jumps into videoke merry-go-round

LAPUS. "I'm really sweet now."

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

JOHN "Sweet" Lapus is not exactly a first-timer on ABC 5's "Sing-galing," which he started co-hosting with Ai Ai de las Alas last month.

"I've been on the show as a guest many times," says John. "When Allan K (Ai-Ai's original partner in the show) was away, I would pinch-hit for him."

Allan K's last appearance on "Sing-galing" was aired on March 6. A few weeks later, he started hosting its rival show on Channel 7, "K! The 1-Million-Peso Videoke Challenge" with singer Jaya. "K" host Arnell Ignacio in turn has moved to Channel 2.

John's first "Sing-galing" episode as co-host was aired on March 20.

With John's inclusion in the videoke singing contest came other format changes, according to "Sing-galing" executive producer Malou Escio. For instance, contestants now come in groups who have to sing well and effectively convince the judges. Escio takes pride in the show's policy of giving the cash prize right after the winning group is declared.

John admits that Allan is a much better singer compared to him. "That's why I'll have more dance numbers," he says and laughs. "Seriously, Allan and I are OK. In fact, I have regular gigs at Klownz Araneta (the bar that Allan and Ai-Ai co-own)."

JAYA. 'SOP' host and 'K' cohost

ALLAN K. From 'Sing-Galing to 'K'

ARNELL. From 'K' to 'MTB'

3 old friends

Ai-Ai is comfortable with the sudden changes in "Sing-galing" and she feels privileged to be working with three of her old friends who are also some of the finest comics in the biz today. How does she compare the three?

"*Si* Allan, *manang*," she says. "*Si* Arnell, *malandi*. *Si* Sweet, *talagang pang*-show time. Every time he was a guest on the show, he would always do cartwheels."

John and Ai-Ai are working together again on TV after their stint on the sitcom "Arriba, Arriba" on Channel 2 a few years ago. "She's fun to be with but she's also serious about life and her relationship with God," John says of the box-office star.

John hopes to tackle dramatic roles in the future. For now, he is working at perfecting his comedy style, which he describes as being brutally frank, "*mataray pero nakakatawa* (bitchy but funny)."

Taunting nickname

People first got acquainted with John as "Sweet" when he played Regine Velasquez's sidekick with that syrupy nickname in the 2000 movie "Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw." The monicker has stuck.

But John says his friends had been calling him "Sweet" long before he made that movie. "My friends gave me that nickname to taunt me," he says. "Because I was nothing but sweet."

But he was far from being sweet when he started in the biz 11 years ago, as researcher and reporter for the TV shows "Showbiz Lingo" and "Cristy Per Minute." He remembers getting a kick out of insulting people just to elicit laughter.

"*Seryoso akong mang-okray*," he tells INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview. "I was also envious of other people. There was so much anger in me."

If people had been watching John very closely, they would have noticed a big change. He turned a new leaf in 1999 after joining the Days of the Lord spiritual renewal movement.

"I've mellowed since then," he says, smiling. "My punch lines are meant only to entertain my audience. I'm really sweet now."

However, he says he doesn't feel comfortable discussing his spirituality in public. "I think there are things that shouldn't be said on TV," he says. "I do a lot of crazy things and then I'll talk about God? It doesn't look good. But, yes, I've always been God-fearing and I regularly go to church in Baclaran."

He is very grateful for the blessings that are coming his way, among the latest of which is co-hosting with Ai-Ai de las Alas in ABC 5's "Sing-galing." He is also the star of "Sweet Talk" on Studio 23 and has a segment on "The Buzz." Recently, he was given the best comedy act award by the Celebrity Chronicle's Pasinaya event in the Filipino-American community in the US.

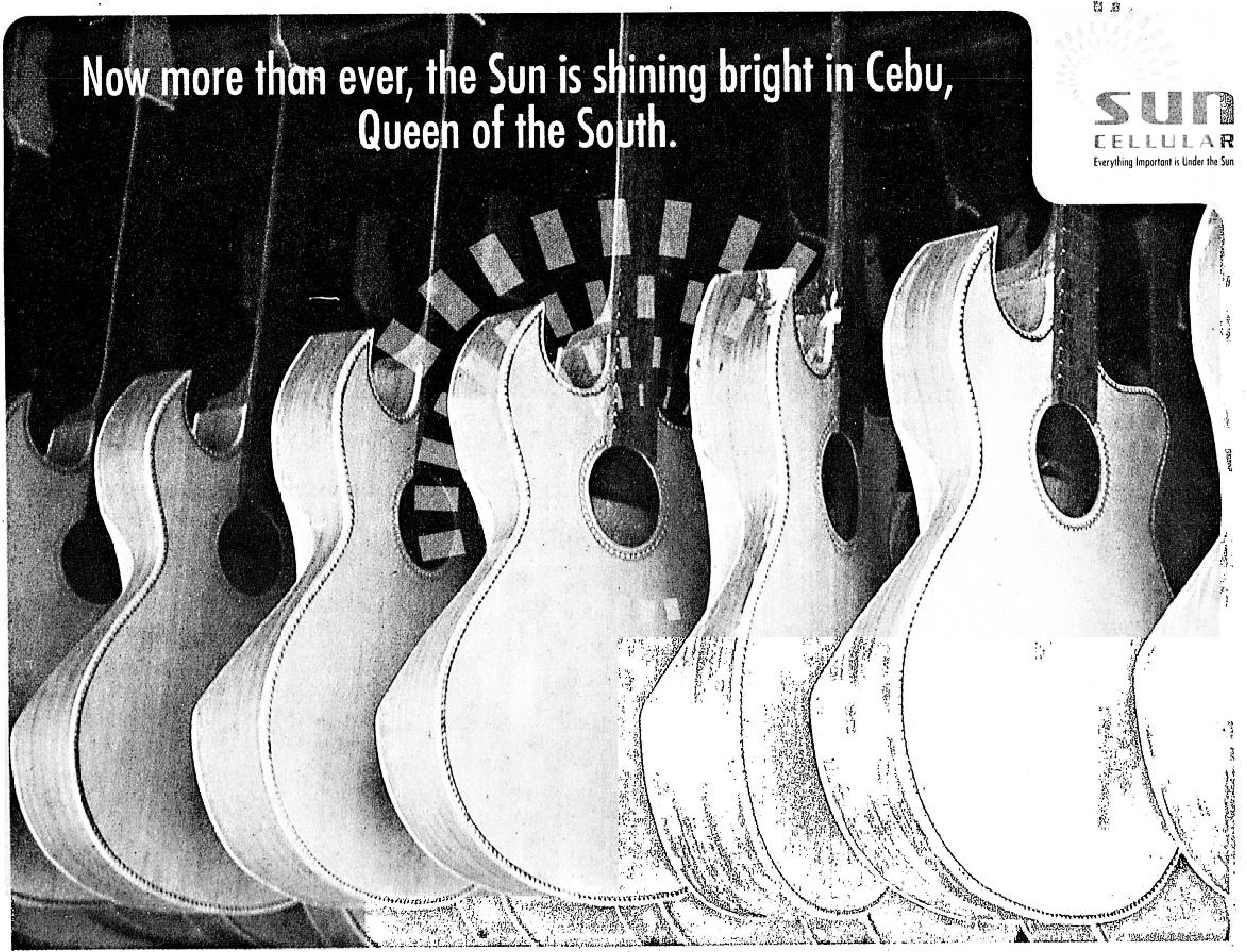
Different comedy

In the upcoming movie, "Masikip sa Dibdib," John plays one of lead star Rufa Mae Quinto's half-siblings who is both a drug dependent and a womanizer. He even has steamy love scenes with Viva Hot Babes Andrea del Rosario and Ella V.

Well, the movie is described as a different kind of comedy.

Did you know that John was initially reluctant to act on cam? "I was then content with being a researcher," he recalls with amusement. But his true calling prevailed. He was, after all, a member of Teatro Tomasino, the theater guild of University of Santo Tomas where he took up hotel and restaurant management.

"At the end of the day, you only have yourself to depend on," he says, sharing the primary lesson show business has taught him. "That's why I advise upstarts to believe in themselves. It's your weapon in the field. *Ako, matagal na akong* confident!"



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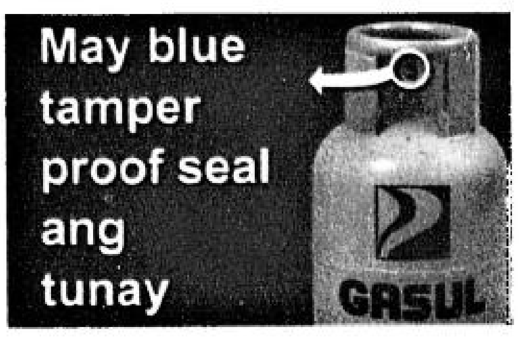
In Cebu, people are seeing the light of one Sun. Soon, so will the rest of the country.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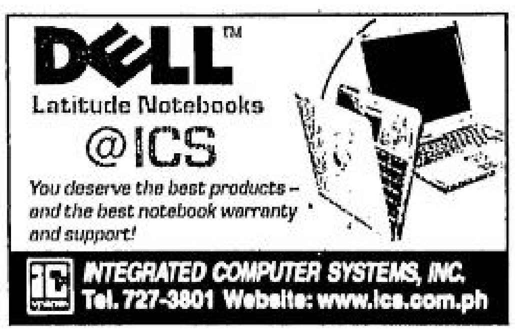
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Q1 deficit seen within target

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY is on track to meeting its closely watched deficit target of P58.9 billion for the first three months of the year, National Treasurer Mina Figueroa said yesterday.

"It's within the target," she told reporters citing preliminary figures. She said this was because of the government's resolve to observe fiscal discipline.

Figueroa, however, refused to reveal the exact figure prior to official announcement slated for the third week of the month.

The government said on Friday that its main revenue agencies exceeded their collection targets in March, raising the chances that the government can meet its January-to-March deficit goal.

The two agencies accounted for 85 percent of the total government revenue last year, when the deficit came in a shade under P200 billion.

The International Monetary Fund and ratings agency Standard and Poor's expressed concern last week that the government was not taking aggressive enough steps to curb the deficit, which adds to a growing pile of foreign debt.

The government aims to limit the accumulated deficit for the year to P58.9 billion by end-March, P79.6 billion by June and P143.3 billion by end-September. It hopes to contain the deficit within the P197.8-billion full-year ceiling, or 4.2 percent of the gross domestic product for the year. If achieved, this would represent an improvement from last year's P199.9-billion deficit equivalent to 4.6 percent of the GDP.

The 2004 target is in line with the government's medium-term goal of posting a balanced budget by 2009.

For the first two months of 2004, the budget deficit reached P34.567 billion. The March 2003 deficit was P27.3 billion. If repeated this March, the deficit would overshoot the first-quarter target.

However, the government is confident it will meet the first-quarter deficit target after the budget gap remained low in the first two months of the year.

In January, the government incurred a deficit of P16.12. The figure increased to P18.45 billion in February. *With a report from Reuters*

GIR hits $16B

THE COUNTRY'S gross international reserves recovered to more than $16 billion as of March on fresh inflows from public sector borrowings.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said that the GIR had bounced back to the $16-billion level, after dipping to $15.73 billion in February.

The decline in the GIR in February had dragged down the peso to all-time lows against the US dollar.

The government's recent $500-million bond offering helped prop up the GIR.

The GIR build-up is expected to further improve on inflows from other pre-election borrowings. This month, for instance, the BSP itself expects $500 million in fresh inflows from a loan syndicate. *Doris Dumlao*

5-year treasury bond yield up 112.5 bps

THE COST of the government's five-year borrowings increased by 112.5 basis points during yesterday's auction, as the market is still trying to push interest rates up to factor in the prevailing political uncertainty.

The coupon rate for the five-year treasury bond increased to 11.875 percent yesterday from 10.75 percent when it was last issued on Jan. 15.

National Treasurer Mina Figueroa explained that the increase was due to the recent move of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to increase its liquidity reserve requirement on banks.

The five-year debt paper was over-subscribed, as tenders reached P4.205 billion as against the offering of the government worth P3.5 billion.

Due to the high bids, however, the government accepted only a portion of the offers raising P1.755 billion.

"We accepted only part of the bids because rates higher than 11.875 percent are too expensive for us," said Figueroa, stressing that the government was poised to reject bids that would significantly push interest rates up.

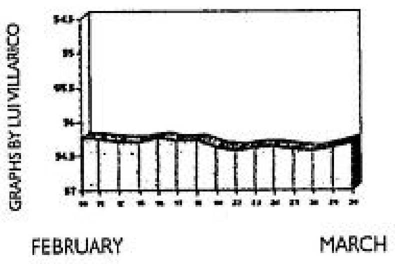
Figueroa expects the market, perceived to have less appetite for short-term government securities in times of political uncertainty, to continue to seek high returns in next week's auction.

She said the government had issued 42-day cash management bills to compensate for the low interest in the regular 91-, 182- and 364-day treasury bills. However, banks also sought high rates for the CMBs.

This means the market was trying to factor in the prevailing uncertainty in pricing their bids for the CMBs, Figueroa said. *Michelle V. Remo*

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

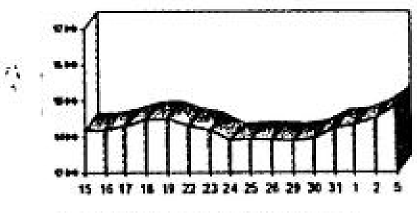
P 56.34 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 5, 2004

¥ 104.79 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., April 5, 2004

GOLD: $424.50-425.00
per ounce Hong Kong, April 2, 2004

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close higher

SHARE prices closed 2.70 percent higher yesterday with the index ending at its highest level in eight weeks on the back of gains on Wall Street and buying of telecom giant PLDT, dealers said.

Buying momentum from last week was sustained in blue chips led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) after the index broke through another resistance level at 1,480 points.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index put on 39.14 points to close at 1,490.05. It moved between 1,449.50 and 1,490.11.

Volume turnover fell to 224.5 million shares while value was up at P628.05 million from Friday's 354.06 million shares worth P591.4 million. **AFP**

THE LEADER TAKES ANOTHER LEAD BY BEING THE FIRST TO ACHIEVE A P20 BILLION TOTAL FUND SIZE.

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Gov't to set aside ₱1B for MRT 3

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE TRANSPORTATION Department yesterday said it would settle within the year its P1-billion obligation with the Metro Rail Transit Corp. for operating the Metrostar Express running from North Edsa to Taft Avenue in Baclaran.

"We would settle the P1 billion this year to pay for the operations of the MRT the previous year," said Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza. "I think we would be given the budget."

Under the build-lease-and-transfer arrangement with the MRTC consortium led by the Fil-Estate Group, the government must pay the private sector group a total of $2.4 billion over a 25-year period.

This year, the government must pay MRTC about $20 million. Government obligation stands at $38 million in 2005, and $39 million in 2006.

The payments would peak to $118.33 million in 2010.

The government collects an average of about P100 million a month from the estimated 380,000 people who ride the Metrostar Express every day.

From the collections, the transportation department must make rental payments to the private sector group. In cases of shortfall, the DOTC uses a stand-by letter of credit from the Philippine National Bank to settle the dues.

Mendoza said that the government still needs to evaluate the claims of MRTC on the obligations as there could be items that the government may offset with the private sector group.

The national government has already settled some of MRTC's maturing obligations in the past as part of the guarantee the government gave the consortium's creditors.

The DOTC yesterday inaugurated the Light Railway Transit Line 2 that stretches from Santolan in Pasig to Legarda in Manila.

By the end of the year, LRT Line 2 would extend all the way to Recto. Next year, the last three stations in Masinag, Antipolo will be operational.

"Because of the legal problems we encountered in extending the MRT-3 line from North Edsa to Monumento, we are shifting the focus of interconnecting the lines to LRT Line 2," said the transport chief. "The government would like to complete the loop eventually."

The railway loop would include putting up an LRT line from Baclaran to Cavite, another one from Cubao to Calumpit in Laguna, through Commonwealth Avenue, and the last stretching from Marilao, Bulacan to Edsa.

"Railways are among this administration's priority projects," the DOTC secretary sad. "We want to make it easier for people in the provinces to travel from their homes to their work place without having to reside in Metro Manila."

Metrostar Express will suspend operations from April 7 to 10 and resume regular service on April 11, according to the management of the railway system.

Metrostar Express said it would undergo major maintenance work on its facilities and equipment during the Holy Week break. MRT-3 would shut down its coaches at 10 p.m. of April 6 and resume operations at 7:30 a.m. on Easter Sunday, April 11.

Philex suspends mining in Benguet

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PHILEX Mining Corp. officials said that they will temporarily stop mining and milling operations at the Padcal copper mine in Benguet Province due to tailings leakage.

In a disclosure, officials of the listed mining firm said that "the situation will be remedied within several days."

Last April 3, Philex reported to the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Natural Resources—Cordillera Administrative Region that there had been a tailings leakage and release incident at one of the mine's tailings pond.

"In the meantime, remedial work is in full gear," Philex said in its letter to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

During the first half of 2003, copper output improved 24 percent to 10.6 million kilograms from the same period in 2002.

The higher output was a result of a 27 percent increase in tonnage mined, equivalent to 4.4 million tons.

Philex reported that one of its cable belts—which conveys ore from the underground to the concentrating plant on the surface—underwent rehabilitation in 2002. The activity was completed in the third quarter of 2002.

The Padcal mine generated revenue of P1.8 billion during the first half of last year and achieved an operating income of P143.8 million. In 2002, the mine generated P1.7 billion in revenue and an operating income of P52.3 million. Higher metal prices contributed to the increase in operating income.

For over four decades, Philex has operated the Sto. Tomas II copper-gold-silver deposit in Padcal, Tuba, Benguet. The Padcal mine was the first block cave operation in the Far East.

Subic to open port to int'l cruise ships

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE SUBIC Bay Metropolitan Authority has tapped a private firm to develop a P160-million passenger terminal complex to accommodate international cruise ships plying Asia-Pacific sea lanes.

SBMA chair Felicito Payumo said in a statement that Global Terminal and Development Inc. (GTDI) will soon start the development of the Rivera Wharf, a former ship repair facility in Subic, and turn it into a world-class port.

"The project will serve as the catalyst for the renewal of Rivera Wharf from a military port to ... Asia's premier cruise destination," Payumo said.

The SBMA official said they wanted the freeport to be different from other economic zones in the country, by blending industrial and tourism projects.

Payumo said that the development of Rivera Wharf is part of the SBMA master plan to modernize the port.

The program, Payumo said, is focused on a $215-million container terminal.

According to GTDI president Rose Baldeo, the contractor would initially infuse more than P150 million in investments to turn the 18-hectare former military port into a cruise ship terminal complemented with tourist parks, a warehouse and even a ship repair yard.

Baldeo said the planned facility would be marketed among cruise ship operators in Asia, Europe and the United States.

"We have actually received partnership proposals with cruise ship operators," Baldeo said.

The cruise ship terminal will comprise three phases, including the construction of entry and exit gates, and the P36-million rehabilitation of the Alava Pier—considered the future gateway of cruise ships and foreign tourists.

Equitable PCI offers online remittance

EQUITABLE PCI Bank, the country's third biggest lender, has embarked on an online remittance business through a partnership with Xoom Corp., an American global money transfer firm.

EPCI yesterday said in a statement that the tie-up will allow non-resident Filipinos across the globe to send their money instantly and securely via the website of the San Francisco-based company—www.xoom.com.

"The tie-up will extend Equitable PCI Bank's reach as a leading money transfer service for overseas Filipinos and place the bank in a position to capture a bigger share of OFW remittances," said Richard So, EPCI Bank first vice president and head of remittance.

In recent years, EPCI bank has been rapidly expanding its Express Padala unit, which has become one of the widest remittance networks serving Filipinos abroad. Express Padala is available through 25 remittance subsidiaries, almost 200 tie-ups and agents, as well as 300 correspondent banks worldwide.

The bank said it recognizes the huge growth potential of the remittance business which is resistant to cyclical downturns in the economy.

OFW remittances to the Philippines are seen to hit nearly $8 billion this year. These inflows help perk up the domestic economy each year.

Through EPCI Bank's new online service, money can be delivered to recipients instantly, or made available for pick-up in any of the more than 400 EPCI Bank branches nationwide.

Beneficiaries do not need a bank account or Internet connection to receive funds. They can get the cash over the counter at any EPCI Bank branch.

The service also includes door-to-door delivery and direct deposit to EPCI Bank account option.

All money transfers with Xoom are processed through PayPal, an eBay company which processes over $30 million in payments everyday and accepts all major credit for payment. *Doris Dumlao*

Crisis delayed, not crisis denied

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THIS cute administration of Gloriaetta, if you still bother to know if it is actually doing something—okay, anything—is not worried about an imminent power crisis.

That, at least, is the impression you get from the official word coming out of the mouths of those babes in Malacañang.

With elections just around the corner, they of course are only trying to minimize the damage on Gloriaetta's ratings, coming from frightening reports on the crisis.

To start with, Malacañang believes that the reports on the forthcoming power crisis are wrong. These reports say that the crisis will begin in 2007.

On the contrary, this cute administration believes that the crisis will not begin until 2008. There—the problem is solved. The crisis is delayed by one year. Next problem please!

***

THAT is the kind of thinking that business has criticized this cute administration for. There's just too much politics in it.

Among the guys down here in my *barangay*, such line of reasoning is nothing but pure ... well, *PALUSOT*.

That the forecast of the crisis is off by one year may be a good excuse for this cute administration, but it does not solve the problem.

What in Kurdapio's name do we care if the power crisis will begin in 2007 or in 2008? Let's even give a bonus of one year. All right, it will not happen until 2009.

The obvious point is, just in case those PR guys of Gloriaetta missed it, what are we doing right now—right this very minute—to avert the crisis? Play politics?

***

AND their answer to the crisis is, well, Gloriaetta wants the government to get out of the power business right away. Hmm.

I don't know if, by selling the power generation plants of the government, this cute administration only wants to avoid getting the blame later.

Look, the government will say, it is not our fault! We don't even have anything to do with the business anymore! You know—something silly like that!

In fact, according to official word, Gloriaetta already ordered the Department of Energy to prepare the sale of the Napocor plants. Once again the problem is solved.

See, Gloriaetta already gave out the order! Never mind that, a long time ago, she also gave out the order to stop *jueteng*. And yet Bong this or Bong that is still around.

***

HONESTLY, I prayed for divine inspiration to figure out how the sale of Napocor plants—right away, please—can prevent the power crisis in 2007. Or, okay, in 2008.

From what I understand about the problem, the only solution is to build new power generation plants.

Unfortunately, we are not building any plant today. And none is even on the drawing board for construction over the next couple of years.

You see, the crisis will erupt, because in the future, we will surely need more electricity than what all our existing plants can produce at the moment.

Official word from the Palace says the solution lies in selling the existing plants. All along, I'm thinking the solution is, we have to build new ones. Sorry, my mistake!

***

BUT on second thought, isn't it that if the government sells the plants of Napocor, the government will again only compete for funding for the new power plants?

Based on the projections in the power business, we will need something like $2 billion to $3 billion in investments on new power plants to avoid the crisis.

Look at that—$2 billion to $3 billion! No local group, even if you include the jueteng lords in *lahar* country, has that kind of money.

To build the new power plants, and thus to avoid the crisis, we have to attract more foreign investments into the sector.

How attractive, may I ask, is the power generation business at this point? This cute administration of Gloriaetta is only killing it with heavily subsidized power rates.

And it is only doing so for the sake of the popularity ratings of a sitting president who said she would not run in the coming elections, but then changed her mind.

***

LIKE it or not, to make the power business attractive to foreign investors, we have to lay down the right policy. Subsidizing the rates, thanks to Gloriaetta, is not the right policy.

Remember—the foreign investors, if ever, are going into a business which is heavily regulated. It lives and dies on government policy.

And so the solution to the crisis, based on official word, is for Napocor to sell its existing plants. Who in his right mind will want to buy them, given the subsidized rates?

The real issue is the pricing of electricity. Napocor is staring at a P140-billion loss this year due to the subsidies. No investor is crazy enough to absorb such losses.

And all for what? So that this cute administration would look good, and hopefully for somebody big in Malacañang to make more money for another six years.

***

LET'S admit, before anything else, that the entire power sector is all tied together, from the generation, the transmission and all the way down to the distribution.

You damage one portion, you damage the whole. For instance, the transmission business is also up for privatization.

The only interested buyer of the transmission company called Transco, a spin-off company from Napocor, was a big group from Britain. It went home in disgust.

That was thanks to the geniuses in the Supreme Court who knew everything, including highly technical matters like setting power rates.

It ruled that Meralco should include income tax as part of its return on investments. This is probably the only country in the world where that is so!

***

FOR all over the world, income tax is not—never—considered as part of the returns in any business. The money went to the government, forgodsakes, not the business.

Now, the foreign investors will simply take a look at that Supreme Court ruling, and they can only arrive at one conclusion. And that is, the same thing applies to them.

And so, in the power business, the taxes you paid are considered part of the money you are allowed to make.

You are crazy to go into that kind of business, in the first place. And believe me, foreign investors are not that crazy.

With the government policy as it is today, nobody will buy those existing Napocor plants, in the first place. In the second, nobody will want to put up new plants.

What are we doing about it?

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 5, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.25	3.25	29,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45	48	45	47	829,900
China Banking Corp.	670	670	670	670	1,510
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38.5	40.5	38.5	40 5	287,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.56	1,200,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	23 5	23.75	23.25	23.5	345,600
Security Bank Corp.	16 5	16 75	16.5	16.75	6,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2100	2120	2100	2120	1,740
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	35,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1530	1550	1530	1545	8,840
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	21.25	21.5	21.25	21.5	19,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.65	0.67	0.65	0 66	2,020,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	840	865	840	865	56,200
Ipeople Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	20,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.041	0.04	0.041	2,000,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.74	1.78	1.72	1.78	9,906,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	990	1015	990	1015	167,790
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	42,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.25	17.75	17.25	17.75	68,200
Manila Electric Co. B	24.75	27	24.75	27	1,571,000
Petron Corp.	2.85	3.1	2.85	3.05	6,314,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.14	2.22	2.14	2.22	78,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1	1	1	1	41,720,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2 95	2 95	2 95	2.95	1,527,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0 27	0 27	0.27	0.27	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Cement Corp.	0.35	0.35	0 35	0.35	100,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.44	1.5	1.44	1.5	37,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.5	18.5	17.5	18.5	274,100
RFM Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	120,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	134,400
San Miguel Corp. B	71	71	71	71	72,500
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	217,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0 26	0.25	0.25	460,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.32	0 32	0.32	0.32	10,000
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.6	6.1	6.5	7,621,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.85	2.85	2 85	2.85	32,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	5,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	17,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1 5	1.5	1.5	30,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.53	0.5	0.53	7,650,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.047	0.047	0.047	0 047	600,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	21.25	22	21.25	22	546,700
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0 16	10,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0 05	700,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	4,156,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0 26	0.26	0.26	0 26	4,130,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0 85	0 85	0 85	100,000
Solid Group Inc.	0 35	0.35	0.34	0.34	60,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0 35	0 35	0 35	0 35	3,700,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.02	1 02	1.02	1 02	50,000
Pryce Corp.	0 26	0 26	0 26	0.26	570,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.51	0.51	0 5	0.5	400,000
Philippine Racing Club	3 5	3 5	3 5	3.5	9,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	20 5	21 5	20.5	21.5	206,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10 5	10 5	10 5	1,600
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10 5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.3	5 5	5.3	5.5	8,406,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	10,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0 12	0.12	0.12	900,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	410,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1 06	1.08	1 06	1.08	6,818,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.18	0 19	0.18	0.18	550,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	6	5.9	6	9,092,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0 0032	0.0032	0.0032	10,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.22	0 215	0.22	1,110,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0 25	0 25	0.25	0 25	10,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0 005	0 005	0.005	0.005	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.003	0 003	0.003	0.003	3,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	200,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0 0028	0.0J28	0.0028	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0 003	15,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.11	0.11	0.11	0 11	50,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc.	2,744,990	77,996 500 00
Comm'l & Ind'l	162,115 890	441,640 785.00
PRO	26,186,000	107,652 950 00
Mining	15,320,000	368 650 00
OIL	18,050,000	58,900 00
GRAND TOTALS :	224,416 880	627,717,785 00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc.	434 59	UP 12 16
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,327 05	UP 59 29
PRO	530 85	UP 9 96
Mining	1,465.91	DOWN 17 37
OIL	1.13	UP 0 01
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	965 24	UP 24 82
Composite.	1,490 05	UP 39 14

NO. OF ADVANCES 41; NO. OF DECLINES: 12; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 24; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 77; NO. OF TRADES. 2,350

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp.** were Ramon V. del Rosario, Oscar J. Hidalgo, Antonio V. del Rosario, Magdaleno B. Albarracin Jr., Ramon R. del Rosario Jr., Francisco L. Viray, Reynaldo V. Paulino, Alfredo M. Velayo, Raymundo O. Feliciano, Ricardo V. Camua and Epifania S. Godinez. The company also approved the appointment of SyCip Gorres Velayo and Company as external auditors for the year.

* * *

CENTRAL Azucarera de Tarlac disclosed Jose Manuel Lopa's acquisition of additional 1,129 shares of stock through ATC Securities Inc.

* * *

SALCON Power Corp. declared cash dividends of P0.20 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of April 20 and payable on April 30. The board approved a memorandum of understanding between the company and Kepco Philippines Corp. for the conduct of a feasibility study on the construction of a power plant in Cebu.

* * *

PACIFICA Inc. disclosed the resignation of Budi Kurniadi as treasurer.

* * *

ARIES Prime Resources Inc. disclosed the withdrawal of Rodriguez Suan & Company as external auditor of the company.

* * *

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. repurchased 75,000 of its own shares at P1.90.

* * *

PCI Leasing & Finance Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 21, 9:30 a.m. at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Mezzanine Floor, Equitable PCI Bank Tower I, Makati City. ***Compiled by Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

April 5, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.823655	1 000000	56 2480
Japan	Yen	0 007882	0 009570	0 5383
United Kingdom	Pound	1.509019	1.832100	103 0520
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105775	0.128422	7 2235
Switzerland	Franc	0 638740	0.775494	43 6200
Canada	Dollar	0 626687	0.760861	42 7969
Singapore	Dollar	0 491441	0 596659	33.5609
Australia	Dollar	0 624265	0 760861	42.6315
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.185574	2 653505	149 2543
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0 219653	0 266674	14 9793
Brunei	Dollar	0 489979	0 596659	33 4610
Indonesia	Rupiah	0 000096	0 000117	0 0066
Thailand	Baht	0.021044	0 266681	1.4371
UAE	Dirham	0 224258	0 272272	15 3148
Euro	Euro	1 000000	1 214100	68 2907
Argentina	Peso	0 289002	0 350877	19 7361
Brazil	Real	0 284706	0 345662	19 4428
Denmark	Kroner	0 134310	0 163066	9.1721
India	Rupee	0 018870	0 022910	1 2886
Malaysia	Ringgit	0 216780	0 263193	14 8041
Mexico	New Peso	0 072236	0 089342	5 0424
New Zealand	Dollar	0 541380	0 657289	36 9712
Norway	Kroner	0 119190	0 144709	8 2402
Pakistan	Rupee	0 014425	0 017513	0 9851
South Africa	Rand	0 128797	0 156372	8 7956
Korea	Won	0 000722	0.000876	0 0493
Sweden	Kroner	0 108251	0 131427	7 3925
Syria	Pound	0 018668	0 022665	1 2749
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0 025073	0 030441	1 7122
Venezuela	Bolivar	0 000430	0 000522	0 0294

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

Central

SM MEGAMALL
6331901

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 SCOOBY DOO 2
6 HIDALGO
7 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
9 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10 PETER PAN
11 OTSO OTSO
12 HOSTILE INTENT

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
3350749

1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 KASIPING
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 OTSO-OTSO
6 HIDALGO
7 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
8 PETER PAN
9 50 FIRST DATES
10 SCOOBY DOO 2
11 GOTHIKA
12 THE GRUDGE 2

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 PETER PAN
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 SCOOBY DOO 2
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 HIDALGO
8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
9 OTSO-OTSO
10 THE GRUDGE 2
11 DONT' TEMPT ME
12 50 FIRST DATES

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 OTSO OTSO
2 SCOOBY DOO 2
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 DUDA / DOUBT
6 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
7 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
8 PETER PAN

SM CITY STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416

1 OTSO-OTSO
2 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 SCOOBY DOO 2
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 HIDALGO
7 PETER PAN
8 50 FIRST DATES
9 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10 BUTTERFLY EFFECT

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 OTSO-OTSO
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

North

SM CITY MARILAO
(044) 933 2013 to 17

1 BONE SNATCHER
2 WATER DEMON
3 OTSO-OTSO
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 50 FIRST DATES
4 SCOOBY DOO 2
5 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
6 OTSO-OTSO

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 TORQUE
2 PETER PAN
3 DUPLEX
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066688

1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 PETER PAN
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
7 SCOOBY DOO 2
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
9 HIDALGO
10 OTSO OTSO

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763055

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PETER PAN
3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT
8294975

1 OTSO-OTSO
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

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2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST [illegible]	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST [illegible]	2 PETER PAN
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3 50 FIRST DATE

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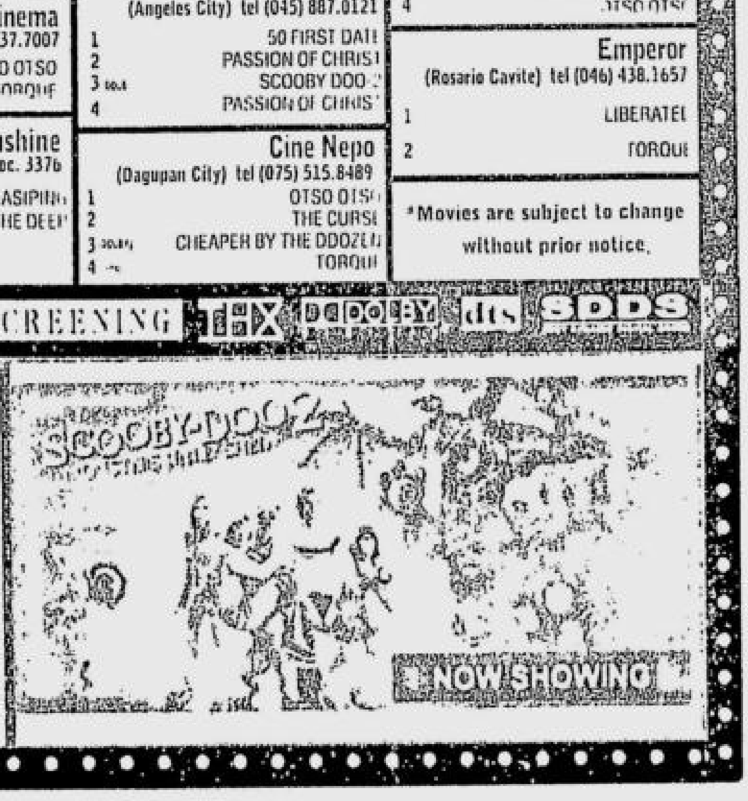
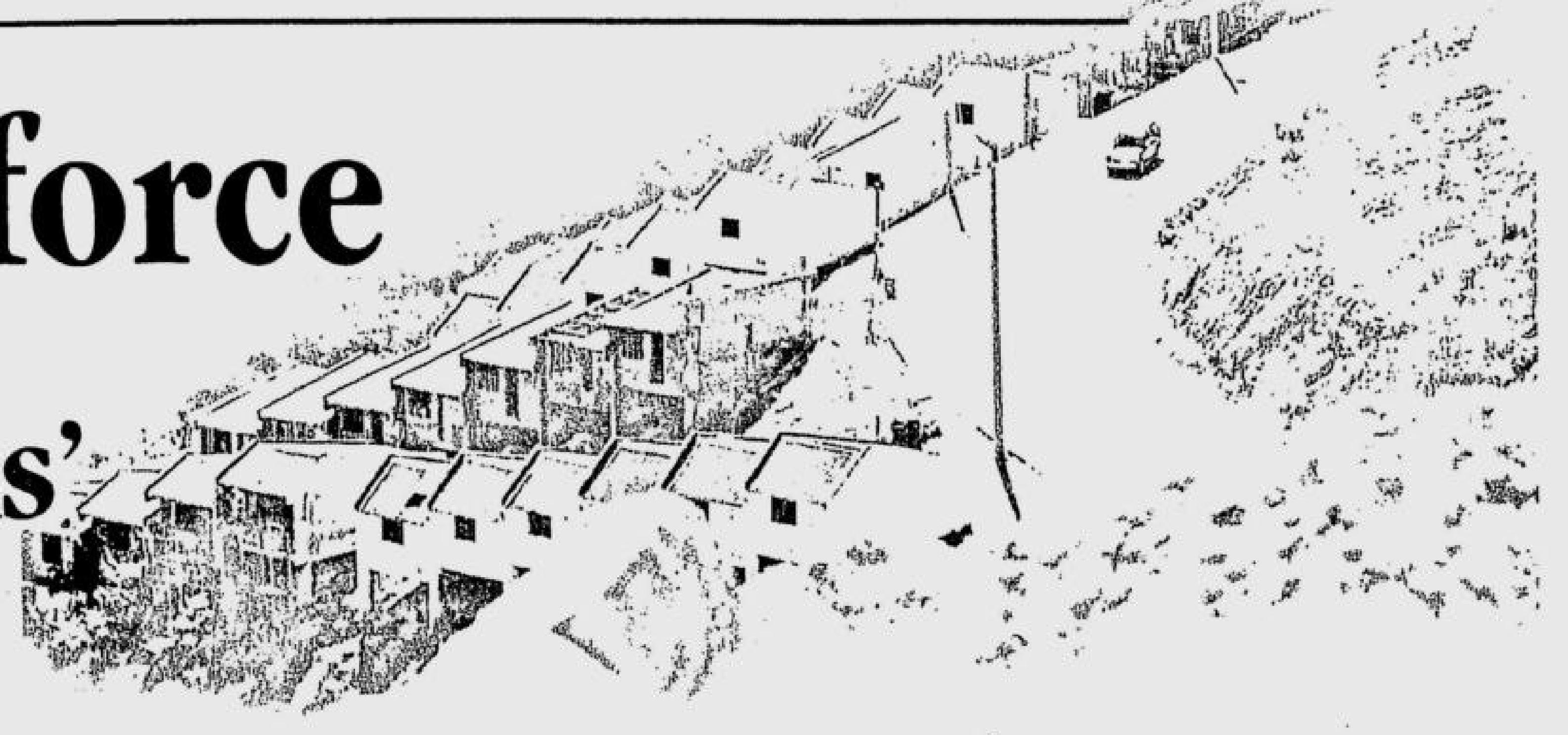


BUHAI MASS HOUSING PROJECT

DENR task force identifies 'potential risks'



By Jerry Esplanada

BAD NEWS for the thousands of would-be homeowners at the Buhai mass housing project of the Bulacan provincial government and the real estate firm Alto Projekt Asia. Buhai is indeed sitting on "unstable ground," making its site not safe, and not ideal, for a project of such magnitude.

No less than the Central Luzon office of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, an attached-agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, has confirmed to the INQUIRER what some Norzagaray folk have been saying all along.

Initial findings

"What used to be solid rocks (at the project site's foundation) are no longer solid... They have become highly fractured, highly weathered and highly altered... Definitely not an ideal foundation for a mass housing project." This was disclosed by MGB-Region III chief Arnulfo Cabantog, citing initial findings of a DENR task force that recently checked out the project site.

MGB chief geologist Orlando Pineda described the site's rock foundation as *basag-basag*.

Said Pineda: "You're supposed to anchor your house on solid rocks for a more competent foundation. *Para matatag. Kaso 'yung bato doon, 'yung tinatawag naming bayabas* foundation, *dahil nga sa nag*-intrude *na* diurite *nadurog siya. Eh, doon nakapatong iyong mga bahay.*"

The controversial Buhai, short for Bulacan Housing and Agro-Industrial Inc. and also known as Buhai Garden Homes, is perched on the slopes of a remote hill chain in the sleepy towns of Norzagaray and Doña Remedios Trinidad.

Buhai, also a pet project of Gov. Josefina de la Cruz, is the planned relocation site for some 10,000 families who will be displaced by the government's $400-million Northrail project.

Potential risks

More bad news, this time from Director Lormelyn Claudio of the Environmental Management Bureau (Region 3). The agency has identified "potential risks in some portions of the area should the project be pursued."

A recent "ocular inspection" of the Buhai site by a DENR team revealed that "portions of the project site are steep, mountainous and more than 18 degrees in slope," Claudio also said.

The government bans land development, especially for housing purposes, on areas with over 18 degrees in slope which are "better suited for forest or timber land," Cabantog noted. "Except, of course, if the slope has a competent foundation."

DENR Secretary Elisea Gozun has directed the EMB to closely monitor the Buhai project, said to be sitting on loose and watery ground and quoting Norzagaray Mayor Feliciano Legaspi, "could be a potential Cherry Hills" and an "accident waiting to happen."

The Aug. 3, 1999 disaster at Cherry Hills subdivision in Antipolo City killed at least 59 people and destroyed 379 houses.

Anything but ideal

When interviewed, Cabantog said the site of the Buhai housing estate was anything but ideal.

Members of the DENR probe team were "obviously not satisfied (with what they discovered at Buhai Garden Homes). That is why, they reported the ground was unstable. It's not really an ideal location for such a project," the MGB regional director pointed out.

"There's some mud and flood siltation, according to our team's initial report, meaning parts of the slopes are already being eroded," said Cabantog.

He explained further that "the rocks present (at the project site), which we call bayabas formation, are actually volcanic rocks. But there had been intrusion of subsilicious materials, resulting in weathered and soft rocks. Those rocks which had undergone the alteration process are now in clay form."

In the cities of Baguio and Tagaytay, homes are being built on mountain slopes, "because they have competent rock foundations, rocks which have not been altered, rocks which have not been weathered," Cabantog pointed out.

But those at the Buhai site are different, he said. They are "really altered. You can easily see that even the rocks that used to be dark-colored have become white in color after going through an alteration process."

Asked about ideal locations for a mass housing project, Cabantog said "there's no substitute for a flat to rolling terrain. Definitely not a terrain that is steep."

"You have to defy the law of gravity, right?" he asked.

Repeated warnings

Norzagaray Mayor Feliciano Legaspi, among other Bulacan local executives, have repeatedly warned "putting up a housing estate on those slopes was wrong. That's one of the reasons we didn't give them a permit."

"Even portions of the (8.67-km access road from Poblacion to the project site) have either cracked or caved in," Legaspi pointed out. Buhai is not accessible from Poblacion, DRT.

Bangkal barangay chair Marcelino Punzal observed the project site was "prone to landslides, especially during the rainy season."

Dominador Tupaz Jr., Alto Projekt Asia president, has denied the local officials' claims.

Serious geological problems notwithstanding, there's still light at the end of the tunnel, according to MGB officials.

Required to submit

They urged project proponents to submit an Eggar, which is short for Engineering, Geological and Geohazard Assessment Report on the Buhai site.

"With an Eggar, they'll be able to determine what mitigating measures they could take. We're talking about engineering interventions, but such will be very costly, really very costly for a project like Buhai," Cabantog said.

In a letter to this reporter, Claudio also said that "upon preliminary investigation and inspection and recognizing the potential risks in some portions of the area should the project be pursued, this office sent a letter to Gov. De la Cruz of Bulacan regarding the additional information required for

DENR/ B5

RESIDENTS and guests at the Architecture and Landscape fair held at Ayala Westgrove Heights look over pictures of the beautifully designed homes.

Stunning home designs, landscapes showcased

RESIDENTS and guests of Ayala Westgrove Heights had the rare opportunity to view a unique collection of design masterpieces by respected architects and landscape designers at the two-day exhibit at the Kidsgrove Clubhouse.

The premier residential community based in Silang, Cavite, proved the perfect venue for the design show because some of the exquisitely designed homes at Ayala Westgrove Heights and Ayala Land projects were the creative handiwork of the participating exhibitors.

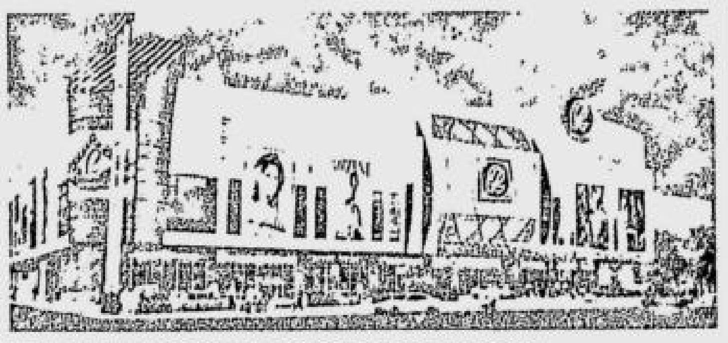
Stunning design works

Those who attended the event were quite fortunate to view the stunning design works on display in each booth. Inspirations for future homes come in handy via lively exchange with exhibitors such as LVD Architects, Design and Build's Architect Enzo Diaz, JEY Builder & Contractor Architect Joselito Ysmael, J.R. Pangilinan Architects, Architecture Network, Isla and Isaac Architects, EAA and Architects and Mirafuente and Associates. Principal architects and representatives were more than happy answering questions ranging from design trends to choosing quality materials, what works and doesn't in terms of colors and design in homes.

Valuable tips

Visitors and homeowners looking for ideas on landscapes received valuable suggestions and tips from DQA Environmental Design's Landscape planner Frank Borja and Garden By Sanders Inc.'s designer Shirley Sanders.

Ayala Westgrove Heights is a residential refuge amid lush greeneries and mango groves filled with a wide array of bird species. It proved most conducive hideaway from the bustling city atmosphere with its serene environment, fresh air capped by quality amenities to meet residents' recreational needs.



RLC MALL OPERATIONS EXPANSION

Robinsons Land Corp. expands its mall operations in Pampanga with the opening of its 16th mall, Robinsons Big R Supercenter Angeles on Balibago, McArthur Highway, Angeles. Robinsons Big R Supercenter Angeles will be a three-level shopping mall, housing over a hundred retail outlets.

IFC loan completes US$63-M fund for land title automation

LAST year, Korea's Samsung Corp. agreed to provide a US$41-million loan to the Land Registration Systems (Lares) and now the private project company is now building up a computerized, effective, fast and graft-free land titling and registration system in this country.

Only last week, the International Finance Corp., private sector arm of the World Bank Group, signed a US$22-million loan agreement to push the gigantic project. The IFC loan completes the US$63-million project cost.

Show of confidence

The two events, amid the economic and financial difficulties being experienced by most countries in the region, according to Lares chair Cezar Quiambao, are "a clear indication that the country still enjoys the confidence of foreign funders."

Moreover, he said that "despite persistent obstacles that almost threatened our resolve to push the completion of the project, we at Lares continue to believe that the government's land titling project will benefit the country and its people a lot."

Last week's event, Quiambao stressed, "is a clear expression of IFC's continuing support to finance infrastructure projects that will produce a positive impact on the economy and promote better public service."

With the loans, Lares and LRA officials said, the timely completion and delivery of the Land Title Computerization Project to the government is assured. The major components of the project's Phase 1 have been completed, while the remaining components are in progress.

Signatories

Francisco A Tourreilles, IFC director for infrastructure, and Quiambao signed the loan agreement at the Peninsula Manila in Makati City.

Witnessing the signing were IFC country director Vipul Bhagat, and Lares president Delfin T. Hallare Jr. Special guests included Marietta "Mai-Mai" Jimenez, secretary for the president's Priority Programs and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) projects; Secretary Peter Favila, Department of Trade and Industry; former Finance Secretary Roberto De Ocampo; former Ombudsman Aniano Desierto and LRA Administrator Judge Benedicto B. Ulep.

"For a well-functioning system of property rights to develop, the ownership of land rights has to be formalized through an effective land titling and registration system," said Tourreilles. By providing a secure land record of land ownership and a more efficient retrieval and record management system, the project will facilitate the use of titled land as collateral for borrowing by individuals.

Bhagat said the project "demonstrates that the private sector can support government efforts to provide more efficient and secure public service. It will allow individuals to formally establish ownership of property. Small and medium enterprises can look forward to improved access to financing due to improved collateral based on clear property rights. This should set the stage for a more sophisticated mortgage market to develop and play a critical role in the overall development of more sophisticated financial markets.

Coverage

The project covers the first three phases of a five-phase, 10-year build-own-operate (BOO) concession. It will allow LRA to maintain on-line information on current, complete and accurate land titles. It will maintain the security and integrity of records, implement more reliable land registration procedures, and provide timely responses to customers through user-friendly electronic information access to the LRA central office and all registries of deeds by linking up the 160 registries of deeds.

The project aims to eliminate graft and frauds perpetrated by land title syndicates issuing fake or spurious land titles to the disadvantage of the government and the public, particularly, the poorer sector. It will help LRA, said Ulep, "not only in closing its door to land-related crimes but in opening new doors of public confidence as well."

Gratitude

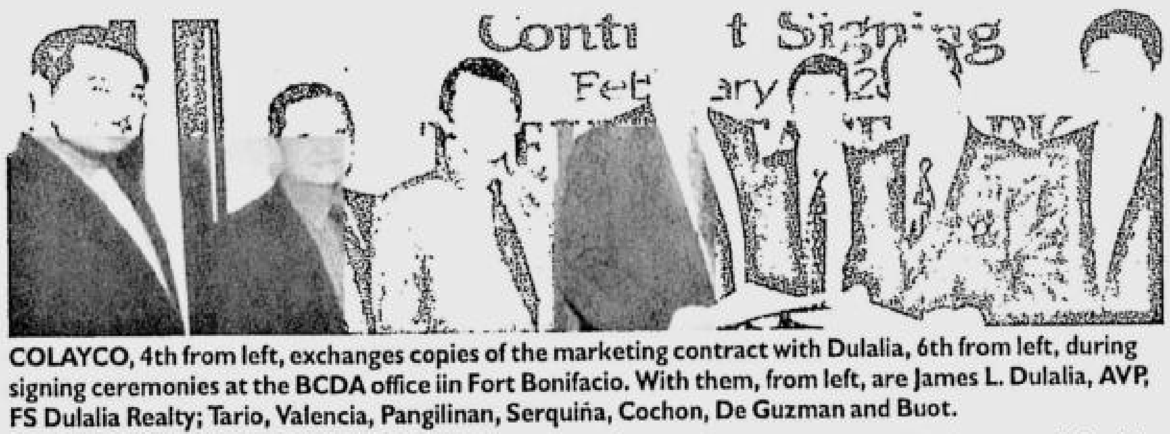
Quiambao especially expressed Lares' gratitude to President Macapagal-Arroyo and the LRA project management executive committee led by Ulep and Deputy Administrator Edilberto Feliciano and all others whose support has "bolstered our confidence in the worthiness of the project."

On behalf of the government, Jimenez congratulated the government's private sector partners for pursuing the LRA project which is part of President Macapagal's initiatives to institutionalize information and communication technology (ICT) in the public service. ICT in government, she said, has become more practical, more cost-effective and necessary to achieve the public good.

Heritage Park marketing contract signed

RUFO Colayco, president of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, recently signed with real estate professionals a contract for marketing a portion of the 68.4-hectare Heritage Memorial Park (Area 2) at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

The real estate professionals were led by the Florentino S. Dulalia Jr., president of FS Dulalia Realty Inc.; Arsenio de Guzman Jr., president and chief executive officer, Asian Pacific Group of Companies; Sammy Valencia, executive vice president-marketing, RGV Real Estate Center Inc.; Herbert Buot, national president, Philippine Association of Real Estate Boards (Pareb); Louie Serquina, chair, Realty Service Practitioners Multi-Purpose Coop; Laura Garcia of Realty Coop and Real Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines (Rebap), Pedro C. Tario, president, PC Tario Realty; lawyer Louie Pangilinan, legal counsel, FS Dulalila Realty; and Jennifer Cochon, vice president, Three Roses Realty.



COLAYCO, 4th from left, exchanges copies of the marketing contract with Dulalia, 6th from left, during signing ceremonies at the BCDA office iin Fort Bonifacio. With them, from left, are James L. Dulalia, AVP, FS Dulalia Realty; Tario, Valencia, Pangilinan, Serquiña, Cochon, De Guzman and Buot.

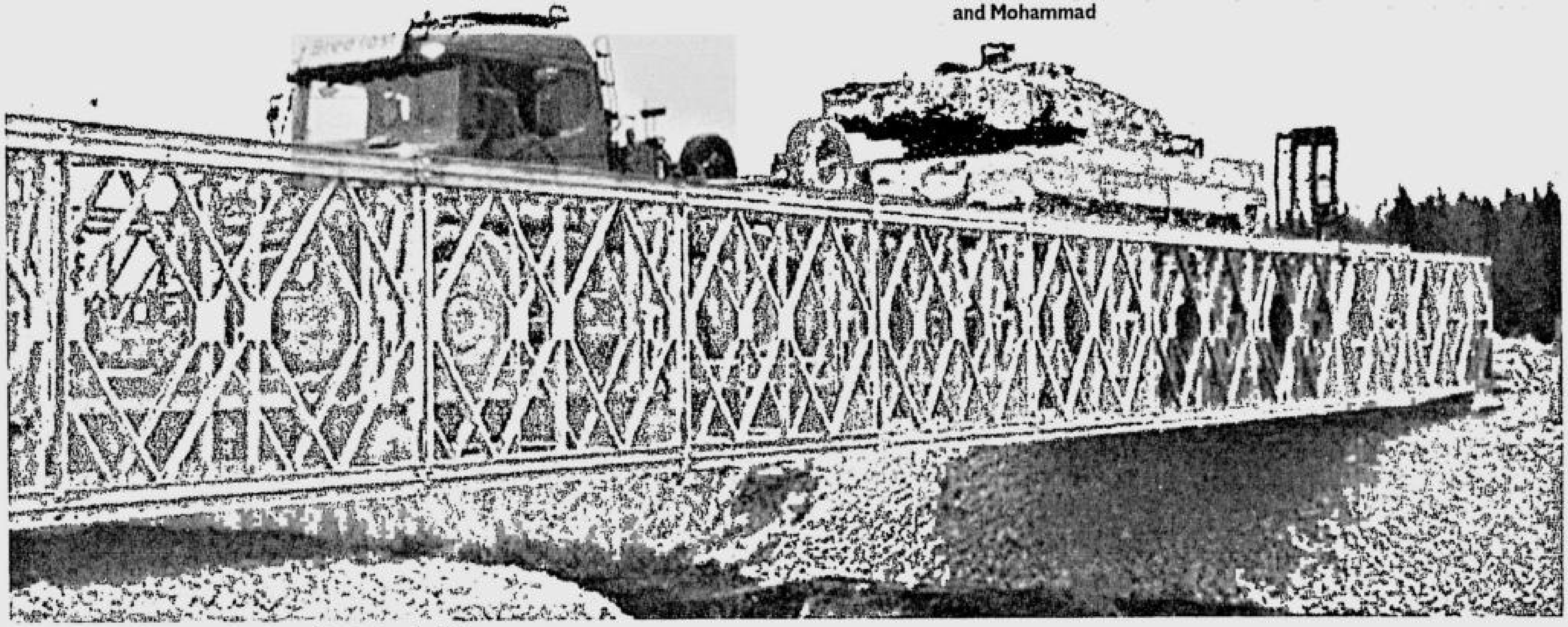
Heritage Park is master-planned as a high-value, multi-use memorial and public park complex—the first memorial park in this country functionally dedicated to preserving and propagating national legacies and cultural wealth. The park is accessible from three major thoroughfares, Epifanio delos Santos Ave. (Edsa), via McKinley Road; South Superhighway, via Lawton inside Fort Bonifacio; and Circumferential Road No. 5. It is a full-service memorial park offering a comprehensive line of products and services to assist families in their time of need.

Its products are two-square-meter plots for bone or cremated remains at the Angel's Touch Gardens; a columbarium as depository for cremated remains in granite wall feature; lawn lots and headstone lawn lots for ground burials, family gardens for four to eight full-body ground burials; walled estate lots in low stone walls allowing markers and upright monuments for six to 10 full-body ground burials, and 12 plot estate lots for 12 burial plots. These products may be availed of for as low as P13,500 up to P2.2 million. Interested parties may join the free project and site orientation with any of the business partners at McDonald's Fort Bonifacio every Wednesday at 2 p.m.

Pinoy engineers replicate RP bridge program abroad

By Charles E. Buban

SHARING engineering knowledge and experience: Maala, Palma and Mohammad



ONE of the bridge types developed by Mabey and Johnson

BRIDGES are said to transform the local economies of the areas where they are located (from subsistence to having thriving market economies), improve farm-to-market access and provide more services and opportunities to local communities.

In fact, the National Economic and Development Authority, in its hope to spur economic growth in the countryside, approved last year a P2.91-billion countrywide bridge project involving the construction and replacement of 200 priority local bridges nationwide.

"These projects are now being fast-tracked by the Department of Public Works and Highways that is currently building at least three bridges a week around the Philippines under the President's Bridge Program (PBP)," informed engineer Quiel Maala who has spent six years with the PBP.

He revealed that once completed in all the regions (except the National Capital Region, Region 13 and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which have similar existing projects) it will have a total length of 5,306 lineal meters.

Other countries taking note

"News of PBP's success has even reached other countries that they now want to replicate it," according to Maala who went recently to Papua New Guinea to inspect its bridge sites, help with the surveys and train its local engineers in the modular bridge erection techniques.

In fact, this country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, got interested in the modular steel bridging technology of British firm Mabey and Johnson, which is extensively used in the PBP projects.

Mabey and Johnson is one of the leading bridge suppliers in the world specializing in bridging, steel fabrication and construction products.

Wide variety of needs

"The types of bridges Mabey and Johnson can deliver are capable of meeting a wide variety of needs here in the Philippines. What other countries want to learn from us is how Filipino engineers were able to successfully apply the technology here," said engineer Galen Palma who together with engineer Badar Lakibul were invited to inspect bridge sites in war-torn areas north of Sri Lanka.

Palma and Lakibul also trained their Sri Lankan counterparts in the science of survey and how to use computer-aided design (CAD) systems.

"We can thank our over six-year experience in designing and building Mabey and Johnson modular steel bridges under the PBP," said Palma.

Via e-mail correspondence

While the two were in Sri Lanka, they were also in touch via e-mail with structural engineer Mohnur Mohammad who continuously provided the two with technical support on structural analysis and calculations.

"It was fun as I experienced how knowledge can be passed on to others via modern communication," said Mohammad.

Said Palma: "Other countries are now looking at Filipino engineers in meeting their bridge construction requirements. The PBP is indeed a success story for us."

Lots of potential

"We expect that this is just the beginning," said Mohammad. "As other countries like Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka are trying replicate RP's phenomenal bridge construction rate, this situation may generate more demand for Filipino engineers who can share their knowledge and experience to these countries."

Indeed, the PBP has developed home-grown experts with outstanding export potential.

"We hope that we can be an inspiration to other engineers as other countries are now recognizing Filipino talent," said Palma.

The PBP now employs over 500 Filipino engineers nationwide.

Through the PBP, a total of 153 bridges aggregately worth P426.5 million will be built this year, with a long-term aim of building 526 bridges in Mindanao, Palawan and Basilan by 2005.

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10 steps to finding the right home for you

BUILDING DREAMS

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

THE FIRST four steps to finding the right home were discussed in last week's article. The remaining steps are:

Step 5—Search for the correct location

Let the weekend house hunting trips begin. Once you have decided on the home that you need and can afford, you may now start to look at the locations that you may want to live in. Do not reject a location outright just because you have heard of bad publicity about it. Go there and confirm the facts for yourself. Many people prioritize a location based on its proximity to schools, malls, offices and public infrastructure. Others want to be far from urban centers to be free of noise and air pollution. It is only you who can decide based on the order of your priorities. If you want your children to be near their schools, then you may have to travel more to go to your place of work.

After you have zeroed in on the location that you want, then it is time to look for the houses that are available in that location. Try to look and check out as many properties as you can.

Step 6—Look at your purchase options

After you have decided on the location. You may want to look at your purchase options. There are quite a few:

- **Finished Home**—Duplexes, townhouses and condominiums are most of the time built by a developer and all you have to do is move in to these units. If there are some design elements that you want to be changed, then you may have to do it by yourself. There are also many pocket developers who build single-detached residences that are sold complete with all of the necessary amenities and fixtures. You may also want to consider these.
- **Design and Build**—There are "one-stop shop" builders who can do the design and construction for you. All you have to do is to tell them the layout that you would need. You also get to select the finishing materials that go with your home. This would include the faucets, fixtures, colors and even the furniture that will go with your home. Another option is to contact a home designer and then after the design is made, ask a builder to construct the home for you.

Step 7—Buy or build?

If you decide to buy a completed home, then all you have to do is assess whether it fits your needs, check its quality and then pay for it. If you want a specific location but could not find a house for sale in the area that would satisfy your needs, then you may buy a vacant lot and have your designer and builder construct your home. Each of these options offers advantages as well as disadvantages.

Step 8—Consider all the options

Once you have selected the location and the type of home that you want, you may want to make a tabulation or checklist of all the features of each home that you are considering. You will eventually arrive at the top choice and after this, and then it is time to calculate the total costs of the purchase.

Step 9—Calculate total costs

The contract price of a home is usually not the total price that you have to pay for. To transfer the ownership from the seller to the buyer, the parties involved have to pay taxes. These additional expenses, which are usually paid by either the buyer or seller, include the capital gains tax, documentary stamps, transfer tax, registration fees, VAT and withholding tax. Each transaction situation is different and it is best to consult your real estate professional regarding this matter.

Step 10—Buy

Before making the payment, make sure that all of the papers of the property are in order. This means checking the authenticity of the title, the geodetic coordinates, etc. This process is not well known by the average homebuyer so it is suggested that you ask the help of your real estate professional to make sure that everything is in order.

If you borrow money from the bank, then you also would have to sign documents in order that the mortgage can be properly annotated in the title.

Final Note. It is always best to approach the home-buying process carefully. A home is not a commodity in which one can afford to make a mistake in the process. The worst thing that can happen is that you may get stuck with a property that you do not really need which is compounded with legal problems. Always seek the help and advice of a real estate professional of your choice. As we always say: Know what you want, what you need and what you can afford.

E-mail the author at aaacacio@pacifc.net.ph.

Demand for Santarosa Estate 2 up

ALONG THE SOUTH Luzon Expressway corridor, the municipality of Sta. Rosa, Laguna has consistently emerged as one of the most progressive self-contained communities offering economic, housing, educational and recreational opportunities.

According to Steve Dy, vice-president of Laguna Properties Holdings Inc., this factor has largely influenced the decision of young urban professionals (yuppies) and executives to establish their homes at Santarosa Estates 2. Less than an hour's drive from Makati, the 14-hectare residential subdivision offering house-and-lot packages is part of the nucleus of Sta. Rosa developments being spearheaded by LPHI parent company Ayala Land as the next business center of the South.

Strong demand

A new phase of the development offering lot cuts from 180 sq m to 330 sq m and homes with floor areas from 110 to 165 sq m just opened recently in response to strong demand. With house-and-lot packages starting at P3.0 million on the average, Santarosa Estates 2 represents an opportunity within reach for young families to enjoy the benefits of an LPHI community.

From a macro point of view, the most significant benefit thus far has been the consistent appreciation in value of projects developed by the real estate giant and its subsidiaries. Before the entry of LPHI into the area over 10 years ago, for instance, Sta. Rosa lots sold for as little as P2,500 per sq m. With the entry of LPHI into the area, the average price per square meter in the LPHI neighborhoods has appreciated more than five times through the years.

Cozy community

From another vantage point, Santarosa Estates 2 is a cozy community "offering the best of both worlds," says Dy. "It has a country ambience being so close to Tagaytay but at the same time has all the conveniences of a progressive community." These include village amenities such as an infinity swimming pool, a multipurpose hall, gazebo, children's playground and pocket parks close to each residence. Santarosa Estates 2 also has a dedicated security force and 24-hour water.

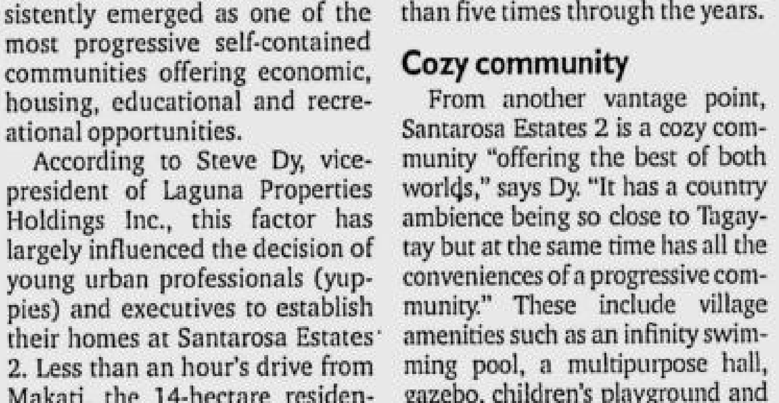
In addition, it has Ateneo Graduate School, De la Salle Canlubang, St. Scholastica's Westgrove and other well-known institutions of learning in its immediate proximity. Moreover, local and multinational manufacturers in the area offer economic and employment opportunities. For entertainment and recreation, a number of malls offer all the conveniences.

Dynamism indicator

The restaurants in a community sometimes serve as an indicator of its dynamism, Dy says only partly in jest. Just a few minutes from Santarosa Estates 2 can be found among the most highly-rated Japanese restaurants as well as a European-style bistro offering fusion cuisine and a creperie. This says something about the residents in the area and the potentials of the community, he observes.

A recent transport study comments that Sta. Rosa has "the necessary ingredients for urbanization.... A good resident, employment and education base." Thus, it is likely to develop into a dynamic area like self-contained Ayala Alabang and its predecessor, Makati.

Santarosa Estates 2's recent expansion is a testament to the community's strong potentials.



THE NEW phase of Santarosa Estates 2 was recently presented to potential homeowners.

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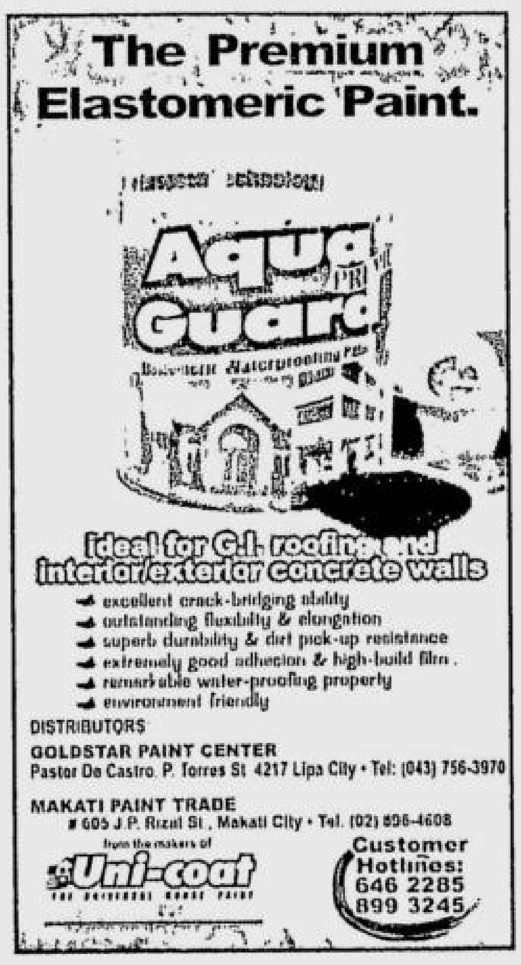

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DENR task force identifies 'potential risks'

From page B4

the project, which include, among others, an Eggar."

The EMB regional office in San Fernando City, Pampanga, had also required Buhai proponents to submit a detailed description and discussion of the project "impact areas"; clarification on the actual project location; detailed and final site development plan for the 60 hectares of the 300-hectare project area; overall master development plan; resolution from the host municipality; updated Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan or EMMP; and a watershed management plan.

At this writing, project proponents have yet to come up with all eight paper requirements.

Claudio furnished the DENR secretary a copy of her March 23 letter to this writer where she also cited this paper's real estate section for its "concern in the protection of our environment."

Both Gov. De la Cruz and Tupaz had earlier assured the project site was safe.

When interviewed, the Bulacan governor said she would not allow herself to be attached to a project that is not safe, stressing "I don't need that kind of burden to my conscience."

To back up her claim, De la Cruz furnished this paper a copy of Buhai's "geotechnical investigation report" purportedly prepared by a Buhai consultant firm called BIPGMTE.

The four-page report neither said the project site was safe nor unsafe, but it indicated the Norzagaray-DRT hill chain was not the perfect choice for an ambitious and bold endeavor like Buhai.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of PLACIDO NERA has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 269; Page No. 55, Book No. XIX; Series of 2004 of Notary Public for Makati City Atty. Nazario Regino
(PDI-April 6 13 & 20 2004)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE is given that the estate of the late PEDRO DELOS REYES was extrajudicially settled with waiver among his heirs before Not. Public Hector B. Centeno as per Doc.#84, Page 17, Book 1035, Series of 2004.
(PDI-April 6, 13 & 20, 2004)

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Univ. of East Cert. Nos. 5311, 6880, 7734, 8700, 9800, 10959, all in the name of Victor A. Arches (17 shares), Cert Nos. 5310, 6879, 7733, 8699, 9799, 10958, all in the name of Minda N. Arches (17 shares) and Cert. Nos. 5330, 6064, 6212, 6881, 7735, 8701, 9801, 10960, 12073, 12754, 13605, all in the name of Victor A. Arches and/or Minda N. Arches (67 shares). Should no one contest after one year, new certificates will be issued.
(PDI-April 6, 13, 20 & 27, 2004)

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
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DR. JOSE N. RODRIGUEZ MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Tala, Caloocan City

April 5, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital invites responsible and duly accredited suppliers from DOH/CHD-NCR to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following items:

A. GROCERY PRODUCTS
B. PORK, POULTRY & EGGS, COW'S BEEF
C. FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
D. FISH & SEAFOODS
E. BAKERY PRODUCTS

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:
Issuance of Bid Documents: APRIL 12-27, 2004
Pre-Bid Conference: APRIL 14, 2004, 1:00 p.m.
Submission and Opening of Bids: April 28, 2004, 1:00 p.m.

Prospective bidders may secure bid proposal forms from the BAC Secretary, Administrative Office, Dr. Jose N Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of (P400.00) FOUR HUNDRED PESOS

All activities shall be held at the Training Room, Dr Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, Tala, Caloocan City, unless announced otherwise.

Each bid must accompanied by a bidder's bond in the form of a certified check, manager's check, or GSIS Bond in an amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid. The Approved Budget Cost is stated on the bid tender documents.

For further inquiries, interested bidders may contact the BAC Secretary or call telephone no. 962-9887 or 962-9884.

DR. JNRMH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to notice of award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidders of the grounds for the hospital's action

(Sgd.) DAVE ELVIN G. SANCHEZ, MD.
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - April 6 & 12, 2004)

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Ibang Lakad 'To: Holy Week Thursday TV Special

THE Holy Week is an opportune time to take advantage of a much-awaited long weekend. This is especially true for an increasing number of young Filipinos. For them, it is synonymous to getaways, adventure and fun.

'Ibang Lakad 'To" is produced by Media Board of the Dominican Province of the Philippines, as a way of inviting the youth to enjoy church visits and the prayers even as they take in the scenic sights and sounds. Hosted by JM Rodriguez and Meg Punzalan, the TV special will be aired at 2 p.m., on April 8 on RPN 9.

With TV special, the Holy Week spirit in young people is nurtured in a way that is both relevant and appealing. It is a playful "visita iglesia" that takes you on a trip full of local color and adventure.

ERRATUM

In the advertisement of **Philippine Atmospheric Geographical and Astronomical Service Administration (PAGASA)**, (Invitation to Bid of Security and Janitorial Services) published April 4, 2004, second paragraph should have been ***"Bid requirements will be issued at.........April 14-15, 2004"*** instead of April 4-15, 2004.

Our apology.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Cebu Regional Office
Gov. M. Cuenco Ave., Banilad, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority in Region VII, with its official address at Banilad, Cebu City, is inviting all interested qualified sack manufacturers / suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following empty sack (MTS) requirements for Visayas and Mindanao areas:

MTS Type	No. Of Pieces	Approved Budget for the Contract
1. Procurement MTS	600,000	4,418,400.00
2. Rice Milling MTS	500,000	3,086,000.00

Summary of Bidding Procedures:

The Bidding shall be governed by RA 9184. A single stage Two Envelope System of evaluation will be adopted. Envelope A shall contain the eligibility requirements as specified in the instruction to Bidders which will be evaluated in a non-discretionary "Pass" or "Fail" criteria. Only those who complied with all the requirements shall be declared "Eligible" and shall proceed to the next phase which is the opening of Envelope B. Envelope B shall contain the accomplished and signed Bid Form.

Bids will be ranked from lowest to highest to determine the Lowest Calculated Bid. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall undergo post qualification by the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) to verify, validate and ascertain statements made and documents submitted in the eligibility requirements. After which, the bidder shall be declared "Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid" and shall be recommended for awarding of the contract.

Schedule of Activities:

Activity	Date/s	Time
Issuance of Bidding Documents	Apr. 12-14/04	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Pre Bidding Conference	Apr. 16, 2004	10:00 AM
Submission & Opening of Bids	Apr. 28, 2004	10:00 AM

Interested bidders may secure the bidding documents from the RBAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, NFA, Region VII, Cebu City upon submission of a letter of intent and after payment of a non-transferable, non-refundable application fee of P5,000.00. Bidders or their authorized representatives are required to be present during the opening of sealed bids. For further inquiries, you may call the undersigned at the following numbers: (032) 232-1939 or (032) 232-6832.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any informality or defect found therein, and to accept bids which are deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO J. ADORABLE
Assistant Regional Director/RBAC Chairman

(PDI - April 6 & 12, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
National Capital Region
U N Avenue, Manila

INVITATION TO REGISTER AND TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR PROCUREMENT OF EMPTY SACKS (MTS) SERVICES FOR NFA-NCR

The National Food Authority, National Capital Region, U.N. Avenue, Paco, Manila invites all interested qualified sack manufacturers / suppliers to register, apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following empty sacks (MTS) requirements for Luzon areas:

MTS (Kind)	No. of Pieces	Approved Budget for the Contract
1. Procurement (MTS)	400,000	P 2,818,800.00
2. Milling (MTS)	500,000	P 2,927,500.00

Application forms and list of requirements for registration may be secured from the RBAC Secretariat upon submission of a letter of intent and after payment of a non-refundable/non-transferable registration fee of P500.00

Only applicants with Certificate of Official Registration as sack manufacturer / supplier of Empty Sacks (MTS) issued by NFA-NCR may apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of NCR Procurement/Milling Empty Sacks (MTS) requirements.

The schedule of bidding activities are as follows:

		DATE	TIME
1.	Issuance of Application for Registration Requirements	March 31 to April 6, 2004	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
2.	Deadline of Submission of Application Requirements	April 12, 2004	12:00 NN
3.	Pre-bidding	April 6, 2004	10:00 AM
4.	Issuance of Application for Eligibility Requirements	March 31, 2004	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
5.	Submission of Eligibility Requirements/Opening of Bids	April 19, 2004	10:00 AM

The Application Forms requirements for eligibility and to bid may be obtained from the RBAC Secretariat after payment of a non-transferable/non-refundable bidding fee in the amount of P2,000.00

Other inquiries may be addressed to the Office of the Assistant Regional Director, NFA-NCR, UN Avenue, Paco, Manila with telephone numbers 563-94-37 and 564-20-71 to 74 local 111.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) Atty. BASILIDES TACO
Assistant Regional Director
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI - March 31 & April 6, 2004)

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Tel.: 632-4217; Fax No. (632) 636-2567
E-mail: psantiago@adb.org or fpalabrica@adb.org

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION TO BID FOR PROVISION OF OFFICE SUPPLIES/EQUIPMENT STORES MANAGEMENT SERVICES (ADB/OAS-2004/003)

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines, invites interested companies to apply for prequalification to bid for the provision of office supplies/equipment stores management services.
2. The Contractor shall manage, operate and maintain the office, computer-related and reproduction supplies, and office equipment stores in the ADB premises.
3. Prequalification documents may be obtained from the Head, Contracts Section, General Services Division, Office of Administrative Services room 4223W, at the above address from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on any working day starting from 6-14 April 2004, upon presentation of the receipt of payment in cash or manager's check of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Three Hundred (P300.00) at ADB Cash Room, Room G239W
4. Last day for submission of application for prequalification is on **16 April 2004**
5. Only prequalified bidders shall be invited to participate in the bidding exercise to be conducted by ADB. Bid documents will be issued to prequalified bidders from **03 May 2004.**
6. This invitation does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation of prequalification documents shall be borne solely by the applicant. ADB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications for prequalifications.

(Sgd.) NORMIN S. PAKPAHAN
Director, General Services Division
Office of Administrative Services

(PDI - April 6 & 7, 2004)

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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Her life was poured out like perfume,
in love for the Church...

Our Very Dear

Mathilde Buhl Beckers

entered into greater Life on April 4, 2004,
Sunday of Our Lord's Passion, at the age of 87.

Her remains lie in state at the Notre Dame de Vie Chapel, Susano Road, Barrio San Agustin, Novaliches, Quezon City, where the Funeral Mass will be offered on Holy Wednesday, April 7, 2004, at 9:00 A.M.

Notre Dame de Vie Institute and the Mother of Life Community request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

In lieu of flowers, donations for the construction of the Chapel of the Institute's Center of Solitude in Encanto, Angat, Bulacan will be very much appreciated.

SO LOVINGLY REMEMBERED
On his
TWENTIETH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

ANTONIO G. DULALIA

Who joined his Creator on April 7, 1984

Masses will be offered tomorrow April 7, Wednesday, at the following churches:

Espiritu Santo Church, Tayuman St., Manila	7:00 am
Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows	7:00 am
Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kanlaon, Quezon City	7:30 am
Quiapo Church	8:00 am
Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Ave., Quezon City	8:00 am
Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Sta. Cruz, Manila	9:30 am
St. John Bosco Parish, Pasay Rd., Makati	12:15 pm
Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills, San Juan	6:00 pm
Our Lady of Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City	6:00 pm
Sta. Maria della Strada Parish, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City	6:00 pm
Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati	6:00 pm
Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan	6:15 pm
St. James Parish, Ayala Alabang	6:30 pm

Relatives, friends, and pious readers are requested to remember him in their prayers

---

ATTY. VICENTE DAYRIT ABAD SANTOS

Has joined his wife **"Cynthia"** and peacefully rest in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord on April 5, 2004 at the age of 76.

His loving children **Rico** and **Angeli Abad Santos**, **Issa** and **Arthur Baron**; grandchildren **Patrick**, **Andrew** and **Claudine Abad Santos** and **Paco**, **Katrina**, **Tanya** and **Bea Baron**; brother and sisters, niece and nephews and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at
Mount Carmel Church, Doña Juana Rodriguez Ave., New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment to be announced.

> "...absent with the body to be present with the Lord." — 2 Corinthians 5:8

David Zaguirre Velasco

Pagsanjan, Laguna

November 10, 1917 - April 4, 2004

Joined his Creator on 86 years of age.

He is survived by his wife, **Elenita**; children **Bessie**, **Virgie**, **Elizabeth**, **Victor** and **Charisma**, **Angie**, **Sammy**, **Grace** and **Joey**, **Joy** and **Ric**; sisters and brothers **Ester**, **Penny** and **Badong**, **Alice**, **Laura**, **Lita** and **Mario**, **Ricardo** and **Remy**; grandchildren, nephews, nieces and other relatives.

The body lies in state at the Pinagpala Children's Home, San Antonio, Pila, Laguna until April 6, 2004 and will be transferred to United Evangelical Church of Pagsanjan, Laguna on April 7, 2004.

Interment will be on Thursday, April 8, 2004 at the Alaala Memorial Park, Pagsanjan, Laguna after the 9:00 a.m. Necrological Service.

In Loving Memory
on the 2nd Death Anniversary of

AIDA CASTILLO HERRERA

of BF Executive West, BF Las Piñas City
January 15, 1919 – April 7, 2002
Beloved wife of the
late Ret. Major Hermito P. Herrera

Holy Masses will be offered, Wednesday,
April 7, 2004 at the following:

Parish of the Resurrection, *BF Parañaque*	6:30 p.m.
Presentation of the Child Jesus, *BF Parañaque*	6:45 a.m.
Jesus the Divine Healer, *Tahanan Village Parañaque*	6:30 p.m.
St. John, the Evangelist, *Tanauan, Batangas*	5:00 p.m.
St. Joseph's Cathedral, *Balanga, Bataan*	6:30 p.m.
Nstra. Sra. de Guia Church, *Ermita, Manila*	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of the Pillar Parish, *Pillar Village, Las Piñas*	6:00 p.m.
Nstra. Sra. del Pilar, *Pilar, Bataan*	5:45 a.m.

Her children: Baby & Tony Paez, Malou & Jessie Villegas, Boy & Cely Herrera, Gerry & Lot Herrera, Roland & Ditas Herrera; grandchildren Margs, John, Cocoy, Jeselle, Myka, Issa, Giegie, Julianna, Migs, Cab, Faye & Wowo; brother, sister, in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers to remember AIDA in their prayers.

CLASSIFIEDS

All-star lineup in Jay-R concert

YOU might as well call it an R&B slugfest.

With a guest lineup that reads like a virtual who's who in the local R&B scene, Jay-R's forthcoming Music Museum concert promises to churn out a whopping dose of foot-stomping funkadelia. Dubbed **'GAMEFACE – THE CONCERT,'** Jay-R's first major outing features the Myxtreme Band and the Whiplash, and will be directed by Louie Ignacio, with musical direction by Mon Faustino.

If it takes two to tango, then maybe more cooks can throw in a bit more spice to Jay-R's groovy-licious brew. For starters, there's Arnee, the dusky and diminutive morena who emerged as the top pick in 97.1-WLS' Artist of the Year and Song of the Year Countdown for 2003, for her remake of *'Cold Summer Nights.'* Not exactly a novice in the industry, Arnee started out at a very young age with Ryan Cayabyab's 14K, and was the country's representative in the 2002 Voice of Asia Singing Competition in Kazakhstan, where she reaped a silver.

Providing counterpoint to Arnee's soaring riffs is Janno Gibbs, comic cum TV host who can easily charm his way into any audience's heart with his souful renditions of R&B classics.

While not exactly a singer in the strict sense, the wacky MTV VJ KC Montero can spin out some mean rap grooves and eye-poppin' moves – all in the spirit of fun. The seasoned jock has been a staunch Jay-R fan and deems it a privilege to be part of his first major concert. "I've seen a lot, but all I can say is that Jay-R's music and performance level is definitely world-class!," he exclaims.

But perhaps there is no better accolade than the mere presence of Mr. Pure Energy himself, Gary Valenciano. Judging from the sheer energy that Jay-R whips up during his live performances, . one can't help but notice some parallels in the two artists – the fancy footwork; disarming presence; songwriting savvy and the remarkable humility.

Produced by Silverline Entertainment & ASTI in cooperation with ALV Productions, **'GAMEFACE – THE CONCERT'** is presented by **Bench** in cooperation with **Skechers Time**. Sponsors include the **Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Universal Records, GMA-7, Myx, PLDT myMusic, Unisilver, Hotshots, Banco Parañaque, YSA Skin Care Center, Master Print Shop, Hot Momas Gourmet, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 96.3 WRock, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Mirror Magazine and Meg Magazine.** Tickets are available at all **Ticketworld Outlets, Music Museum** and selected **National Bookstore** branches. Showtime is 8 PM on April 15, 16 & 17. For inquiries and reservations, please call 721-6726.

Summer Young Image Program 2004

EMBELLISH your innermost potential as MSD Personnel Development Consultants takes you this summer to one of the finest program you'll ever have. With the most complete personality development course, Young Image Program will imbue in every student modern etiquette, good grooming, fine dining and social graces. Highly professional models will also serve as an epitome for students to learn ramp and commercial modeling. With photographic modeling, students are instructed with the way to project and how to project themselves. Skin care and makeup together with posture development are also the vital parts inscribe in this program. Certificate of attendance will be issued and will end with a mega-fashion show.

With 20 years experience, It has been training your entrepreneurs, fashion models, beauty queens, flight attendants, showbiz personalities and speakers. Now its' your turn to shine! So stop being that couch potato and start enrolling now. Open to 5-21-year-old student, the program will start April 19. For reservations, call 781-9861.

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-021

PD Ref. No.: PB040318-PP0043
PR Nos.: ITASD-03-004186/005290

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO – BAC) – HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are.
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract; Provided, however, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. **Procurement of :**
   Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Stationary Single Cell Batteries, 250 AH and 300 AH Vented Lead Acid Type
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the attached Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is as follows
   SCHEDULE 1 : FIVE HUNDRED FORTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 545,000.00)
   SCHEDULE 2 : NINE MILLION NINE HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 9,910,000.00)
   to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting ***April 8, 2004 to May 19, 2004*** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on ***May 07, 2004 at 10:00 A.M.*** at the Admin Conference Room, G/F, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before ***10:00 A.M. of May 20, 2004*** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Corporation.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address

(Sgd.) ANTONIO G. LABAYANI
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – April 6 & 13, 2004)

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TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-021

PD Ref. No.: PB040115-EL0004

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO – BAC) – HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract; Provided, however, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. **Procurement of :**
   DESIGN, SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF DIGITAL VIDEO RECORDER SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the attached Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that will be issued.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is ***P 895,000.00*** to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting ***April 6, 2004 to May 3, 2004*** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on ***April 22, 2004 at 10:00 A.M.*** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before ***10:00 A.M. of May 4, 2004*** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Corporation.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO G. LABAYANI
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – April 6 & 13, 2004)

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Bactidol and ENT experts launch campaign for voice care

DO YOU realize how your voice can make a positive difference in your life? It's not just what you say that matters. It is also how exactly you use your voice that could spell the difference between getting hired after a job interview, closing that sales pitch, motivating your team, communicating your emotions, or persuading someone to consider your idea.

Such is the power of the voice. It could literally spell the difference between success and failure in many aspects of your life. And you can maximize the potential of your voice only if you take measures to take good care of your throat as well.

This was the idea behind the tie-up of Pfizer Consumer Healthcare's oral antiseptic for sore throat, Bactidol, and the society of Philippine ENT experts, when they teamed-up recently to promote throat and voice care awareness in the country.

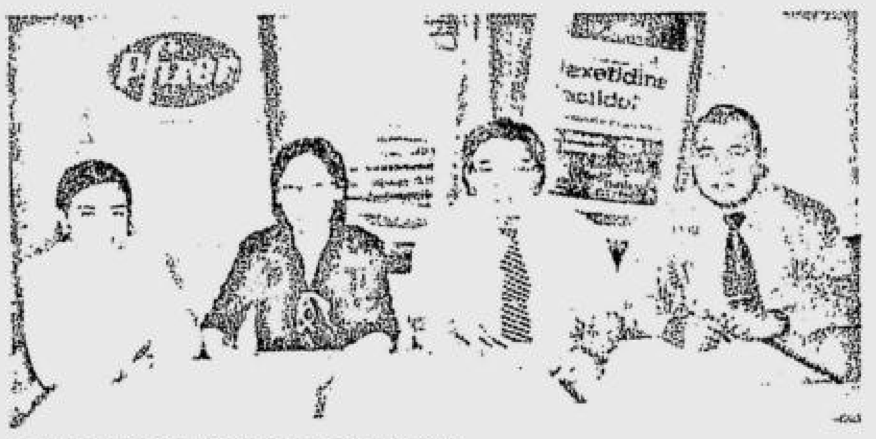
Dubbed as "Empowering Voices", the campaign aims to make everyone aware of the importance of throat and voice care as tools for success. Pfizer's oral care product manager Tina Cabañez explained that the campaign is consistent with Bactidol's thrust to promote healthy throats among Filipinos. This campaign, which was initiated by Bactidol, has the full support of the society of Philippine ENT experts, which is more formally known as the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery (PSO-HNS). Aside from being the authority in ear and nose diseases, these ENT doctors are the experts in throat and voice care. In fact, proper care and use of the voice is already among the rapidly emerging sub-specialties being dealt with by these ENT experts.

By being the first to launch such a campaign in the Philippines, Bactidol and the PSO-HNS have become pioneers in throat and voice care awareness in the Philippines. "We want to bring the best in voice care to the Philippines. People living in other countries, like the United States and the United Kingdom, have a greater awareness for voice care. They have specialized clinics or voice care centers, and non-profit organizations focused on the voice - something that Bactidol and the PSO-HNS hope to someday bring to Filipinos as we become trusted partners in throat and voice care," according to Cabañez.

ENT experts of the PSO-HNS observed that Filipinos often take their voices for granted as they go through their busy daily schedules at work. PSO-HNS President Dr. Cesar Villafuerte, Jr. said, "People usually take their voices for granted, only realizing how important oral or vocal care is when they get sick. What we want to make them realize though, is that proper throat and voice care prevents these illnesses and protects their voices as well.

But while healthy throats and voices are vital tools of the trade for people such as teachers, TV and radio announcers, singers, salesmen, and call center operators, everyone should still take measures to care for their voices, which is indispensable in almost every situation of our lives.

Bactidol is the leading oral antiseptic in the country which provides long-lasting relief for sore throat. It is the only oral antiseptic recognized by the PSO-HNS. Bactidol is also widely recommended by doctors and oral care experts for the prevention of various oral bacterial and anti-fungal infections.



PARTNERSHIP IN VOICE CARE
Shown are (from left): Pfizer's oral care category head Gretchen Borja, oral care product manager Tina Cabañez, PSO-HNS president Dr. Cesar Villafuerte, Jr. and PSO-HNS director Dr. Randy Cañal.

EASTER OLYMPICS PARTY AT THE CENTURY
Century Park Hotel, Nestle Food Services and Children's Hour Phils Inc recently had the signing of a memorandum of agreement, wherein proceeds of the upcoming Easter Olympics Party at the Century will be donated to the said foundation. Shown in photo (seated from left) CPH general manager Paul Gill, Ayala Foundation president and Children's Hour Exec. Comm. vice chair Vicky Garchitorena, Nestle's AVP for field operations Jovanny Caminade, (standing from left) CPH's communication and media manager Toti Palileo, Children's Hour assistant executive director Rhea Alarcon and Nestle's assistant manager for key accounts Ethel Joven. The Easter Olympics Party on April 11 promises a party with loads of food and fun for the whole family. Tickets are P650 for adults and P450 for children (12 years old and below). For inquiries, you may call the Century Park Hotel Public Relations office at 528-5851 to 53.

ACLC scores double gold

TWO senior students of AMA Computer Learning Center (ACLC) emerged as champions in IT events at the eecntly concluded 11th National Skills Competition held at Naga City from March 22 to 27.

Jonathan M. Mariano, a second year student from ACLC Malolos scored 96.65 percent (539 ICS points) to win the gold in the information technology software applications event from among the country's 16 regional champions.

Another gold was awarded to Marconi Moreto of ACLC Taçloban in the mechanical engineering drawing and design (CADD) category with a score of 92.11 percent (541 ICS points).

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) director general Alcestis M. Guiang said the two ACLC students, together with the winners from other trade events, will represent the country in the 5th Asean Skills Competition to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam on September 2004.

The other PNSC trade events are welding, electronic applications, commercial wiring, ladies' dressmaking, automotive technology, cookery, and restaurant service.

ACLC, a member of the AMA Education System, once again proved the quality of ICT training they provide to their students by winning successively for the 4th time since 1998.

The competition is held every two years by Tesda in search of individuals who are exceptionally skilled in various trade areas.

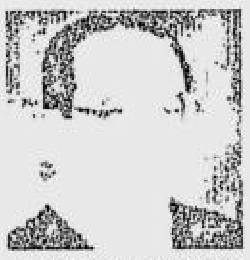
Past champions in IT events all came from ACLC namely, Jeffrey Sulit (10th PNSC 2002), Joey Manansala (9th PNSC 2000), and Allan Caluste (8th PNSC 1998).

A tribute to a retired judge, educator and author

FORMER Senator Bobby Tañada graced a thanksgiving lunch, tendered in honor of former Judge Albino V. Arriero Sr. last Feb. 29, at the Dominguez Royal Garden Hall in Provident Village in Marikina City.

With almost two hundred guests and well-wishers, the thanksgiving lunch, coinciding with Judge Arriero's 75th birthday, was also attended in by former Congressman Oscar Santos, Undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs Sonia Catomber Brady, Belgosa Media Systems Inc executive director Juanito Calditaran, Justice Oswaldo Agcaoili of the Court of Appeals, president of Quezon Capital Rural Bank (QCRB) Leandro Garcia, executive VP of QCRB Rudy Medinilla and City Fiscal Loreto Acejo of Marikina City.

A retired judge from the Metropolitan Trial Court NCR Branch 3, Judge Arriero served in the Philippine Coconut Authority, Agrava Commission, and was appointed State Advocate for Luzon by the Knights of Columbus. He was also awarded the Natatanging Anak ng Lopez Quezon 2000 and Dakilang Anak ng Lalawigan ng Quezon 2003. Judge Arriero has also spent several years teaching at various colleges and educational institutions in the country.



JUDGE Albino Arriero Sr.

He has authored several books the latest of which is What the Law Says and a booklet with annotations of Supreme Court Ruling on Legal Separation available at all National Bookstore branches and Central bookstores nationwide.

CTB HOLDS '04 CONVENTION

The Chamber of Thrift Banks (CTB) recently held their annual convention at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City with the theme 'Promoting an Enabling Environment for Thrift Banks'. The convention tackled the possible scenario affecting the thrift bank sector in the light of economic and political uncertainties fostered by the upcoming national elections. Bangko Sentral Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes cuts the ribbon opening the IT exhibit. Assisting him are (from left): Suzanne Felix, CTB executive director; Susan Figueras, CTB director and Insular Savings Bank president; Tomas Clemente Jr., CTB president and Luzon Development Bank president; Rogelio Florete, CTB director and Queen City Development Bank president; and Benjamin Yambao, CTB director and The Manila Banking Corp president; Ma. Flordelis Aguenza, CTB secretary and Planters Development Bank president; and Evangeline Escobillo, CTB director and Anchor Savings Bank president.

Acquire an American accent

THERE has been an onslaught lately of Filipinos who dream of working in the USA or even those who would like to land a job in a local Call Center. With many companies striving for global prominence and the stiff competition among applicants and co-employees, it is not enough that one possesses the basic requirement of effective communication skills in English. In order to stand out and be recognized, one must have a competitive edge among others which is – the ability to communicate in English with the proper American accent.

Addressing the demand and necessity for such skill, Speechpower, the foremost institution in Communication in the Philippines, recently presented its latest Course offering entitled, Acquiring American accent or triple A. It is a performance course designed to fine tune one's ability to speak and communicate in "standard" American English. The end in view is for the speaker to achieve a wide range of acceptability among native speakers of American English, whether in a person-to-person business encounter or via global communication.

The greatest benefit that will be derived by the students of this course is the instructor, who is no less that the founder and president of Speechpower himself, Joe M. Mordeno. Mordeno has come up with a dynamic course design, which will focus on areas such as speech clarity, logical thinking and reasoning, voice personality, intonation patterns and more. Of course, he will be applying the unique Speechpower methodology, which he created and which has given the organization its excellent reputation for over three decades.

MORDENO

Upon corporate request, Mordeno will conduct a Training Needs Analysis specific to this Course, which will include diagnostic exercises in pronunciation, word and sentence stress, time and tune of American English, oral and written composition. In summer 2004, Acquiring American Accent will be offered on weekends. Enrollment is open. Interested parties may contact any of the Speechpower offices, Cubao – 9110832 to 34; Espana 7357262 or 56; Taft 5236905, 5213601; Eastwood 6871464, 6872093.

Bits Clips

'Martir sa Golgota'

MERK'S Bar and Bistro sponsors "Martir sa Golgota," a modern passion play incorporating political satire on the elections, to be shown free: April 5, St. Jude Parish courtyard, San Miguel; April 6, Munting Isla, V. Mapa Ext. Sta. Mesa; April 7, Plaza Hugo, Sta. Ana; April 8, Mabolo Basketball Court, Obesis, Pandacan; April 9, J. Posadas, Punta, Sta. Ana. Performances at 7:30, directed by Lou Veloso. Playing Jesus Christ is Richard Signey, and the Tanghalang Sta. Ana Company of Actors. For more information, call 721-0801.

Easter break at Edsa Shang

SPEND a relaxing Easter break right in the city with Eda Shangri-La's Easter 2+1 Package from April 1 to 30. Book 2 nights in a Deluxe Room for only P4,650++ per night and in a Superior Room for only P4,000++ per night and get the third night free. For April 4 to 10, dine in any of the hotel's restaurants at 10 percent off. For more information, call Room Reservations at 636-9082 to 87.

Samsonite summer promo

PURCHASE a Samsonite luggage, and get a chance to win round trip air tickets via Philippine Airlines and 3 days 2 nights accommodations for groups of three to Cebu, Boracay, and Davao. For every P1,000 single receipt purchase of any Samsonite, American Tourister and/or Hedgren item, each customer gets one raffle coupon. Plus, Mabuhay Miles members get extra chances to win as they get triple number of raffle coupons for every P1,000 single receipt purchase whenever they present their Mabuhay Miles membership card during the promo. Summer Shopping, Island Hopping promotion started on April 1 and will run through May 31, in all SM stores nationwide.

'Strawberry Temptations'

IN LINE with the strawberry season, Pancake House, in partnership with Nestle Carnation, is once again offering Strawberry Temptations. From strawberry milkshake and juice to strawberry pancakes, these delectable food items are perfect to satisfy the sweet tooth and regale ones cravings. These treats are now being served at all branches of Pancake House.

On the road with the Caltex Summer Samaritan

THIS summer, the Caltex Summer Samaritan program works to ensure that you get to where you're going more than just safe and sound but with enough energy to actually enjoy the place. By partnering with assistance groups like Metrowatch/MMDA, Red Cross, 24-Heroes and companies like Motolite, Smart, Toyota, Nissan and Isuzu, Caltex stations provide a convenient and restful stop for this season's travelers.

First, you will want to do more than just check under the hood to determine if you have a travel-worthy vehicle. Bring in your car at selected Caltex stations with Xpress Lubes for a quick 22-point maintenance check up for free. Station mechanics will check oil, fan belts, tire pressure and other parts of the car to ensure safe and smooth going on the road.

Got your motor running or is it panting from the heat? Bring in your car for a rest and look-see in service tents from Isuzu, Nissan and Toyota in certain Caltex stations. Mechanics and service facilities from these top manufacturers will be ready for minor check-ups and even car repairs if needed.

Check out the Metro Watch Radio Action Group in major highways and selected Caltex stations, too. Roving radio groups will monitor highways for any vehicle mishaps or problems and will call the nearest Caltex station with repair facilities for help. In certain areas, a tow truck, courtesy of 24-Heroes will be on call for assistance. For Holy Week only, Caltex Summer Samaritan will also provide a vehicle towing service.

Forgot to unplug an appliance or leave out water for your pets? Smart Communications and selected Caltex stations will have your worries covered. Make emergency calls at a Caltex station on operational cellphones powered by Smart.

Medical assistance will be available through the participation of Red Cross volunteers.

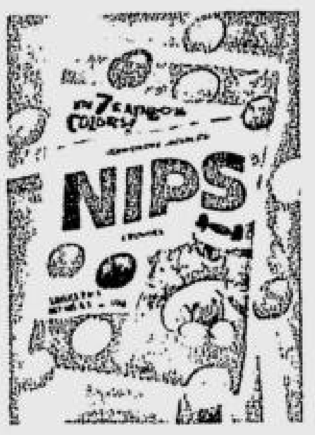
Caltex gives motorists more reasons to make that stop at its nearest station this summer. From clean restrooms to the convenience of an array of refreshments and grocery items from Caltex Star Mart, Caltex stations will give the benefits of a road well traveled and much enjoyed.

The 2nd Binangonan Inter-Barangay Singing Challenge

INSPIRED by the success of the 1st Binangonan Inter-Barangay Singing Challenge last year, the BCHS Class 1968-69 will again host the competition on May 1, 7 p.m. at the Rodriguez Park Poblacion, Binangonan, Rizal. The singing competition is open to all bonafide residents of the town including barangays in Talim Island. Cash and trophy await the lucky 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize winners. For contest details, contact: Teresita Pons Co at 652-0152, Alice Chulvo Villamayor at 929-6352 and Nora San Rufino at 652-0163.

ProductFILES

Color your kids' world with Nips Crispies



ENHANCE your children's vibrant days with Nips Crispies, the candy-coated chocolates in an array of brightly colored candy coating combined with crunchy rice puffs and the goodness of creamy chocolate. Nips Crispies will not only satisfy any child's taste buds, but also create excitement and stimulate imagination. With every bag of Nips Crispies, children can be assured of longer lasting satisfaction since the product will not melt or disfigure. This holds true even after opening the pack, and keeping it for later consumption. The rainbow colored layer of candy coating provides a delectably unique sensation, which brings the child to a whole new dimension in chocolate eating. Nips Crispies, the crunchy candy coated chocolates in rainbow colors are available in supermarkets, groceries and convenience stores in ties and snack bags nationwide

A GLIMPSE OF THE HIGH LIFE
A select crowd of property investors were feted recently to three nights of food, wine and music at the Manila Polo Club for an exclusive preview of Robinsons Land Corp's Fifth Avenue Place high-rise project. True to the commitment of RLC of offering affordable lifestyles along Millionaire's Row, the three evenings represented not just good condo living but refined and polished living. Shown in photo are Lourdes Honrado (center), who won the free 'Trip for two to Boracay package' in the special raffle draw, RLC-HRBD GM Danilo Ignacio (left), and RLC EVP Frederick Go (right), who handed the gift certificate.

Exercise to strengthen 'core' muscles /C4

LIFESTYLE
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Making the waist 'smaller'

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

THIS PIECE is for the woman whose waistline is as straight as a ruler. The shape is usually due to a narrow hip skeletal structure.

If you have this body type, you can become slimmer through exercise and the right diet but, as it is not possible to change your hip bones, you will still have a straight waist:

There are different kinds of figures and, in my opinion, they are all beautiful. One is not better than another. But if you have the ruler or rectangle type body and want more curves, there is a way to do it.

It won't happen by starving, "aerobicizing" to death or abdominal crunching your way from here to eternity. This is where you need to create an "illusion."

Since you can't make your waist smaller, you have to build up the muscles in your upper body so your waist will look tinier. You probably won't lose an inch on your waist but you can make it appear like it has lost not just one, but several inches.

> Creating this 'illusion' requires building up the muscles in your upper body by lifting weights so your midsection will look tinier

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

'Lats' will do it

Lifting weights is the best way to reshape. The most important muscles that will give you that V shape are the *latissimus dorsi* or "lats," as they are affectionately called by bodybuilders. The muscles are at the sides of your upper back. They are the "wings" that Bruce Lee used to show off in his movies.

Not that you will get muscles like those. Women don't have the large amounts of testosterone or male sex hormone needed to build a significant amount of muscle mass. You just want enough upper bulk to make your waistline look smaller.

The other muscles are the middle deltoid or sides of the shoulders. By making the shoulders look a little bit wider, you make the waistline slimmer.

Going to a gym or hiring a personal trainer is the best way to lift weights but you may not have the time or the budget for it. Never fear. You can do it at home at your own time and convenience. You will need, however, to invest in several pairs of varying weights of "fixed" dumbbells, or one pair of "adjustable" dumbbells with various weight plates and a locking collar to make sure the plates don't fall off. These can be bought at local sport shops at reasonable prices.

Getting started

Start with a weight that you can lift about eight times before your muscles get tired. If you can lift the weight 15 to 20 times and feel you could still do more, then the weight is too light for your goals.

Do only one set of eight repetitions three times a week (on the sixth week, add one more set). As you get stronger, you will be able to go up to 12 repetitions before your muscles give up. When you start to do 15 repetitions, it is time to shift to a heavier weight.

For example, for the first three weeks, you can lift six-lb dumbbells eight times. By the fourth week, you can lift the dumbbells 12 times but your muscles are fatigued by the last repetition. Stay at that six-lb level until you can easily do 15 repetitions. Then, shift to eight-lb dumbbells and lift only for eight repetitions. Build your strength until the eight-lb feel easy at 15 repetitions.

Continue progressing to heavier dumbbells until you are satisfied with your new V-shaped upper body. Then, all you need to maintain is one set of 12 repetitions three times a week at whatever weight you last stopped at.

Home routines

Here are exercises you can do at home. The one-arm row and pullover are for the sides of the upper back while the lateral raise is for the shoulders. If you work out in a gym, your trainer can give you many other exercises using weight or cable machines.

One-arm row:

Hold a dumbbell in your right hand. Rest your left knee and hand on a low table or at the side of a bed with a firm mattress. Keep your torso almost parallel to the floor throughout the exercise. Your right arm will be extended toward the floor with the palm facing in. Contract the muscles at the sides of your back, pull your arm backward until your elbow meets your waist or is just a little past your waist. .

Don't pull the arm so far backward that your body ends up twisting sideways. Slowly lower your arm to starting position. For a more detailed explanation and illustration, visit www.tinajuanfitness.info/exercises/onearmrow.html

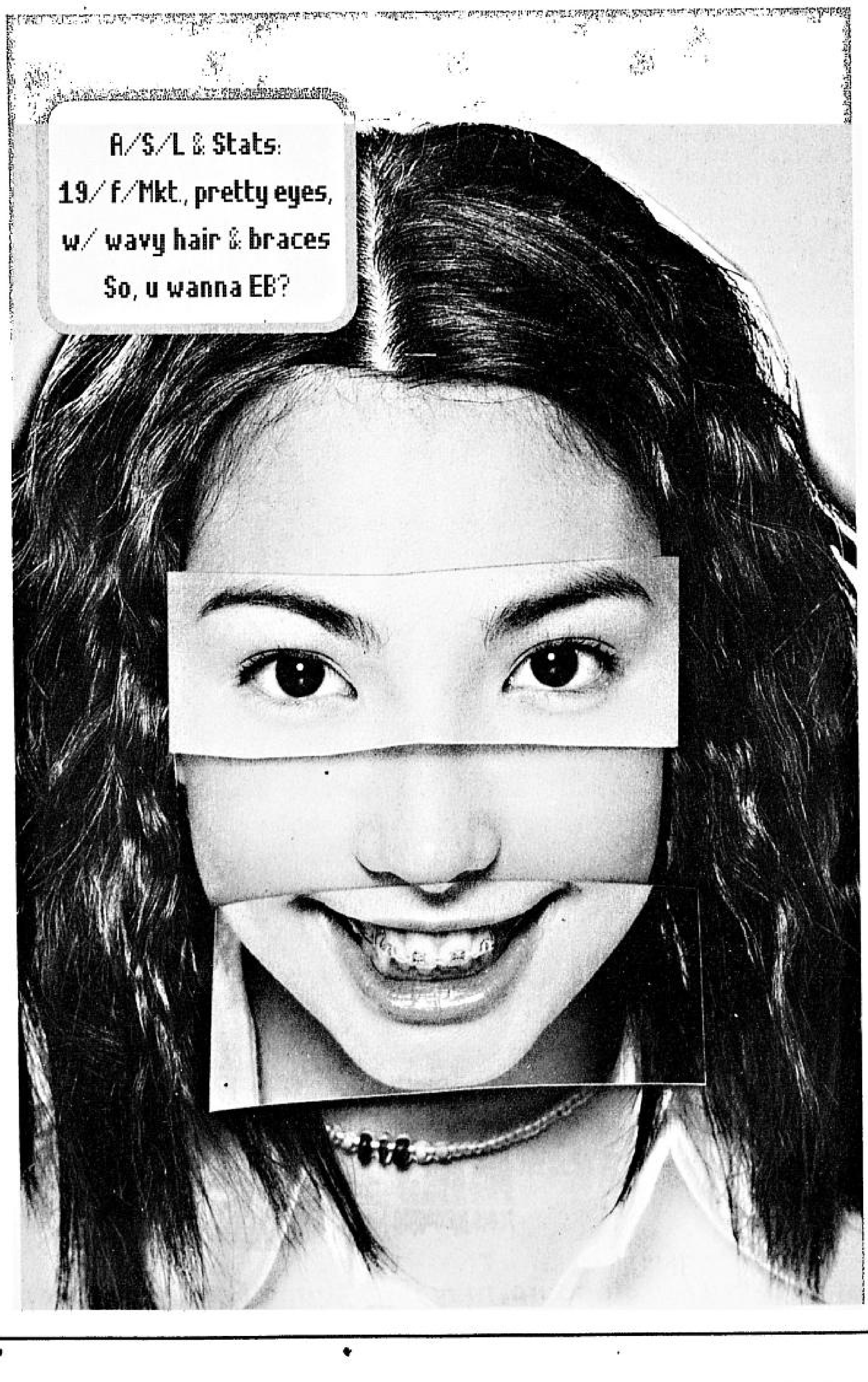
Pullover:

Lie down on an exercise mat with your knees bent and feet on the floor. Hold a dumbbell above your chest with both hands. Keeping the abdominal muscles tight, slowly lower your arms backward. Your elbows should be slightly bent. Go as far back as you can without letting your lower back to arch. Slowly return to starting position. (www.tinajuanfitness.info/exercises/benchpullover.html)

Lateral raise:

While standing or sitting, hold a dumbbell in each hand with your arms at the sides of your body. Keeping elbows slightly bent, raise your arms sideways to shoulder height. In this position, your hands should be at the same level as your shoulders with palms facing the floor. Slowly lower arms to starting position. (www.tinajuanfitness.info/exercises/sidearmraise.html)

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info



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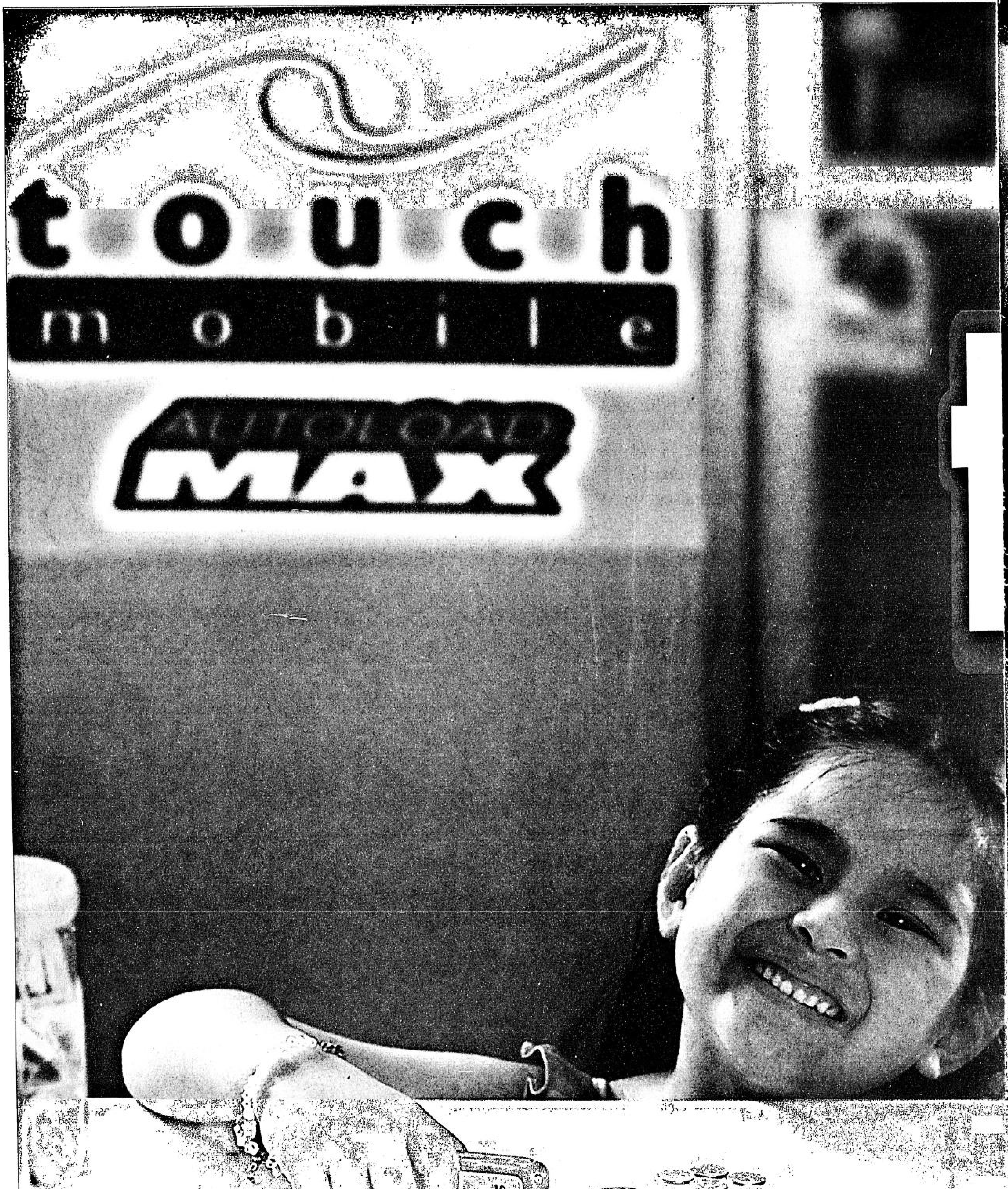
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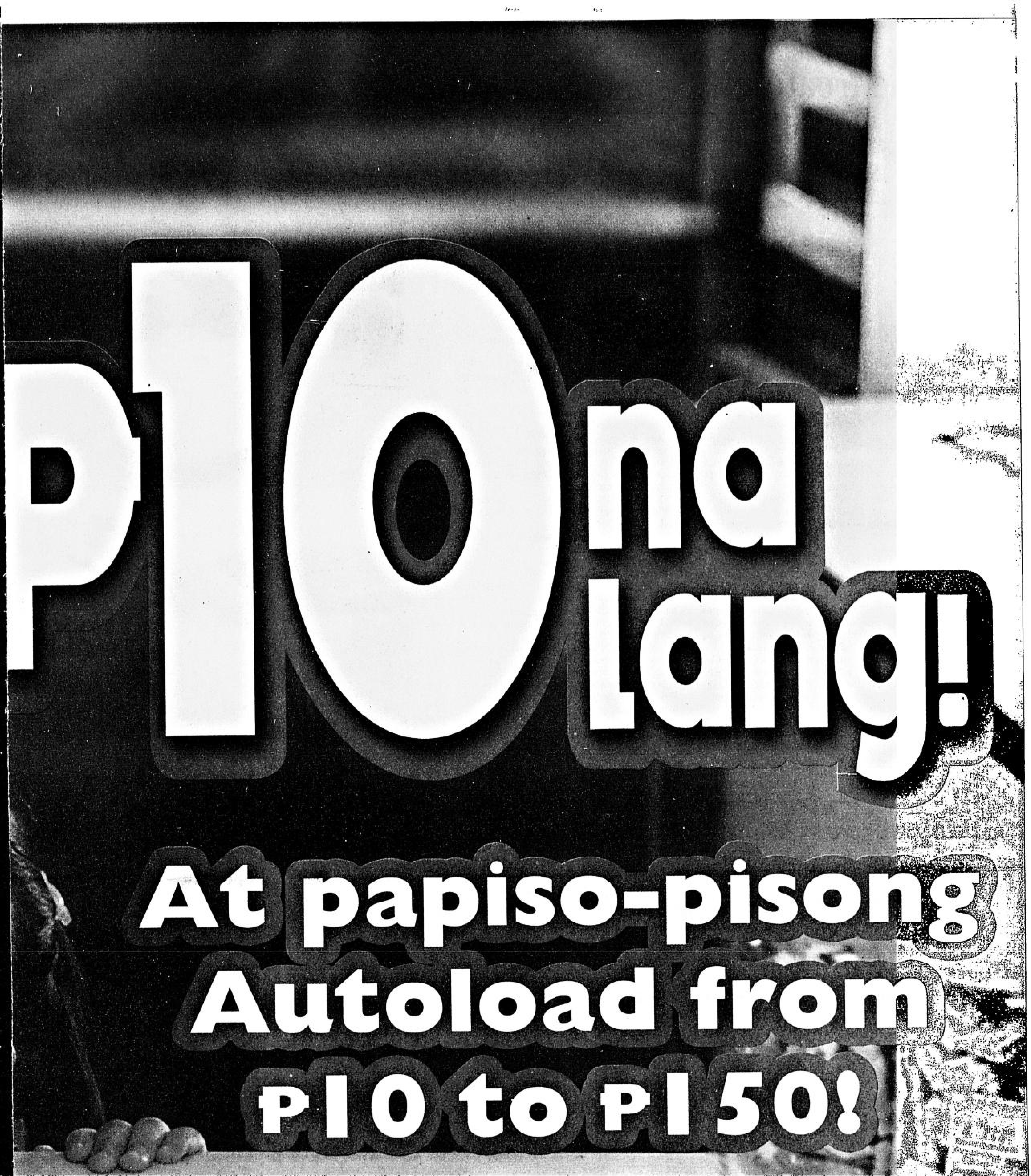

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Humane treatment for the mentally ill

THE METRO Psych Facility (MPF) and Roads and Bridges to Recovery (RBR) in Pasig City, both owned and managed by Metro Psychiatry Inc., aim to make the treatment and rehabilitation of mentally ill patients and substance abusers, respectively, more humane.

Metro Psychiatry Inc. was formed in 1999 by people who were in advocacy and the provision of mental health services as a group or medical practitioners.

The group wanted to establish an institution where people with mental problems would get a humane treatment. Family members would be encouraged to participate in nursing patients back to health through a better understanding of the disorder.

MPF and RBR share a three-story private rehabilitation and psychiatric hospital in Maybunga, Pasig City. MPF has a 60-bed psychiatric ward designed to give patients as much space as possible. It also has facilities for sports and recreation, as well as private confinement. Closed-circuit cameras are strategically located to monitor the ward to keep tabs on patients.

The rehabilitation center has the same facilities as the psychiatric ward.

Members of the staff have been carefully screened and chosen to make sure they share the institutions' views on mental illness and would give patients the kind of care expected of them. Patients' families are involved in the treatment process. They are taught the nature of the illness of their loved ones and trained to identify signs of any recurrence.

Initially, both the mentally ill and substance abusers shared facilities until the company realized that they had different needs. RBR was set up for the rehabilitation of substance abusers, and those with compulsive behavioral problems.

MPF emphasizes the need for a supportive and nurturing environment through appropriate medical services and trained and experienced staff. The program takes into account the patient's need for privacy while maintaining contact with those closest to them, assistance, therapy and skills development. Clients receive individualized treatment during their confinement.

RBR believes both substance abusers and their loved ones should be helped in the process of rehabilitation. Clients draw inspiration from reformed substance abusers that comprise some 50 percent of the staff.

RBR uses a variety of treatment and makes sure programs are individualized. Services include drug testing, detoxificafion, rehabilitation, behavioral modification, family therapy and after-care services.

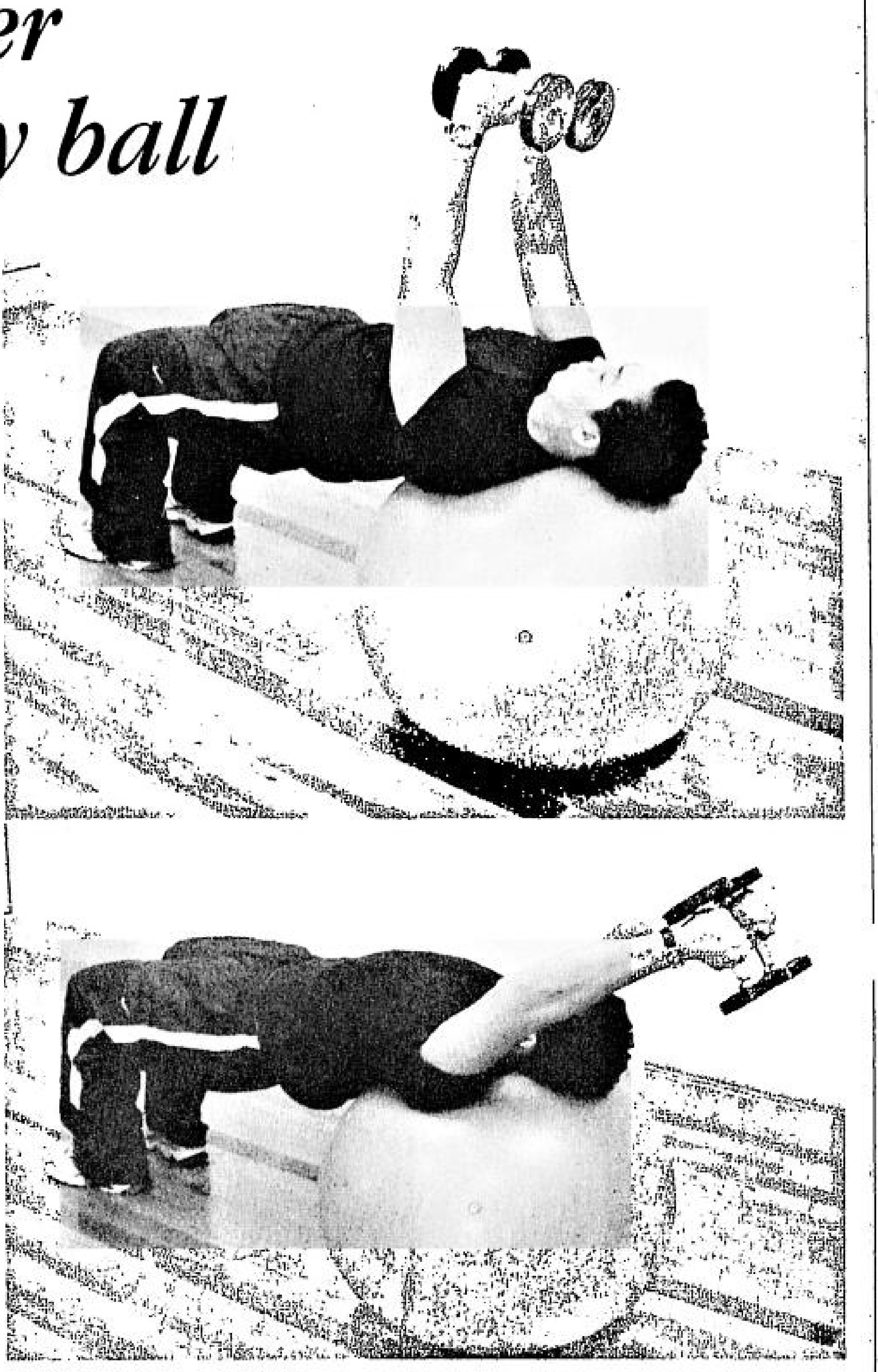
MPF also undertakes, through its Family Link Mental Health Education Program, a campaign to make Filipinos more informed about mental illness and the rights of the mentally ill.

The program is supported by Johnson & Johnson Phils. through MPF's affiliate non-government organization Family Link Phils.

Call 6436006, 6436056, 6435788 or visit www.metropsych.net.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Pullover on stability ball



THIS EXERCISE strengthens the lats (sides of the upper back), "core" muscles (abs, trunk, lower back), as well as the buttocks and hamstrings.

Equipment:

Stability ball, dumbbells. A gym bench can be used as a substitute for the ball.

Exercise technique:

1. Start by sitting on the ball with the dumbbells held close to your chest, your arms bent (not shown).

2. Move your feet forward as you simultaneously lower your upper body until you are in a table-top position with your buttocks in line with your shoulders.

3. Take your arms overhead with the palms facing each other and dumbbells touching. This is your starting position.

4. Inhale as you bring your arms past your head. Exhale as you return to starting position.

5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. This is an exercise that should only be attempted by someone experienced with using a stability ball.

2. To protect yourself, use a ball that is anti-burst meaning a ball that will deflate slowly if punctured and will not suddenly collapse from under you.

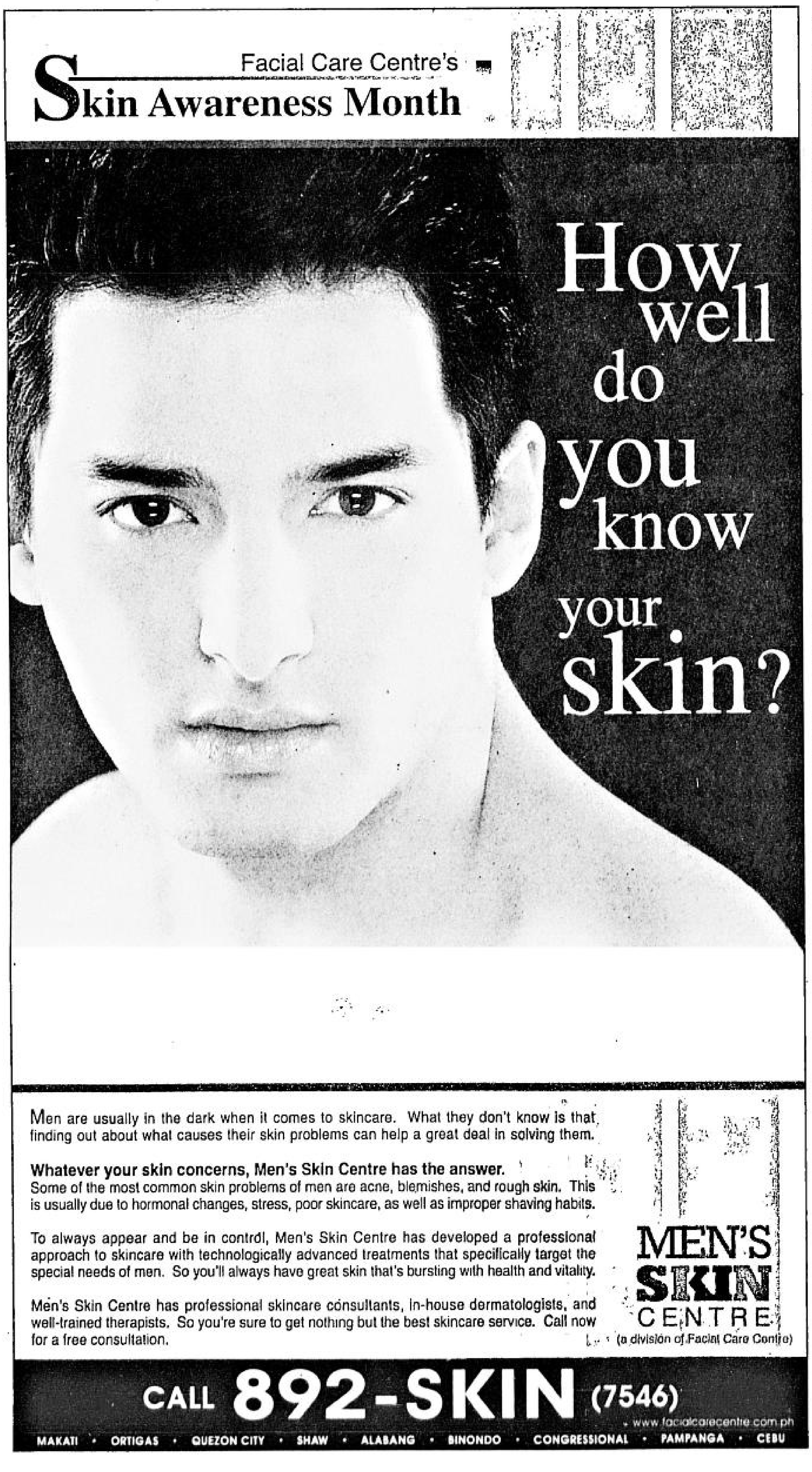
3. Use a reasonable amount of weight. This exercise is not meant to lift very heavy weights. Emphasis is on control and challenge of the core.

4. Keep your buttocks contracted so that hips stay level with the shoulders.

5. When you bring the dumbbells past your head, take care that you do not hurt your shoulders—only go as far as is comfortable for your shoulder joint. Take care also not to allow your lower back to arch. Keep your abs fairly tight to control the movement in your spine.

Repetitions:

Do 12 to 15 repetitions. One or two sets.


How well do you know your skin?

Facial Care Centre's
Skin Awareness Month

Men are usually in the dark when it comes to skincare. What they don't know is that finding out about what causes their skin problems can help a great deal in solving them.

Whatever your skin concerns, Men's Skin Centre has the answer.
Some of the most common skin problems of men are acne, blemishes, and rough skin. This is usually due to hormonal changes, stress, poor skincare, as well as improper shaving habits.

To always appear and be in control, Men's Skin Centre has developed a professional approach to skincare with technologically advanced treatments that specifically target the special needs of men. So you'll always have great skin that's bursting with health and vitality.

Men's Skin Centre has professional skincare consultants, in-house dermatologists, and well-trained therapists. So you're sure to get nothing but the best skincare service. Call now for a free consultation.

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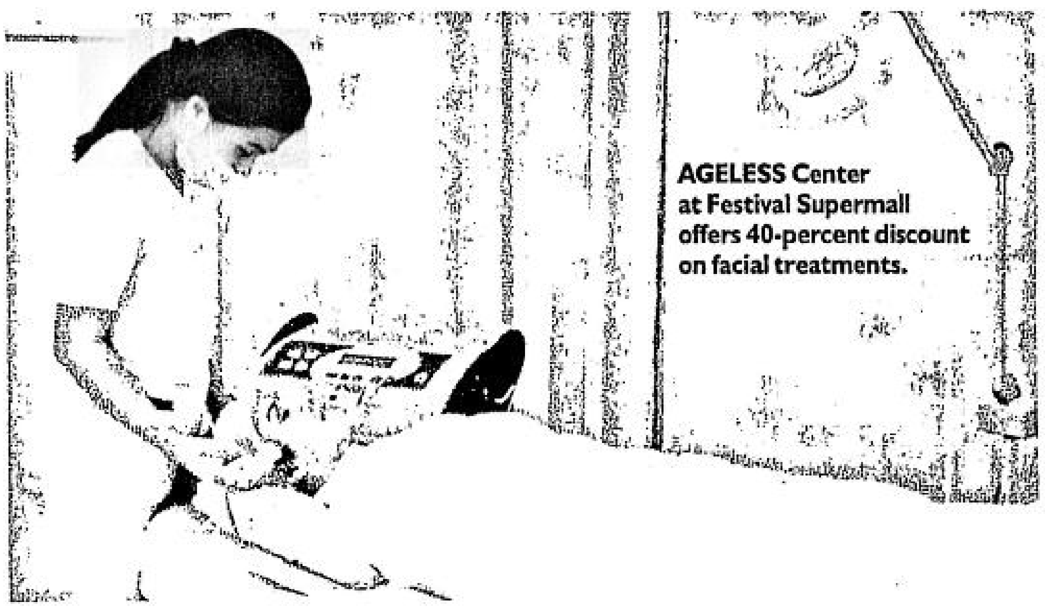


AGELESS Center at Festival Supermall offers 40-percent discount on facial treatments.

A relaxing summer at the mall

ENJOY summer at Festival Supermall in Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang with cool treats from its two spas, a fitness club and a travel kiosk.

Ageless, the first anti-aging center in the country certified by the American Academy of Anti-aging Research offers 40-percent discount on purifying or cold mask facial treatments (P220 to P240). Enjoy half the regular rates on all Skin Master skin rejuvenation treatments (P800 to P1,750), which are machine-aided services that clear facial lines, body lines and blemishes.

A flat rate of P300 (regular rates are P500 and P650) applies to Shiatsu and Swedish full-body massage treatments, while aromatherapy massage now costs P500. Also, get 20-percent discount on foot scrub and massage and 10 percent on foot reflexology.

These treatments are available until April 15. Call 7710851 to 52.

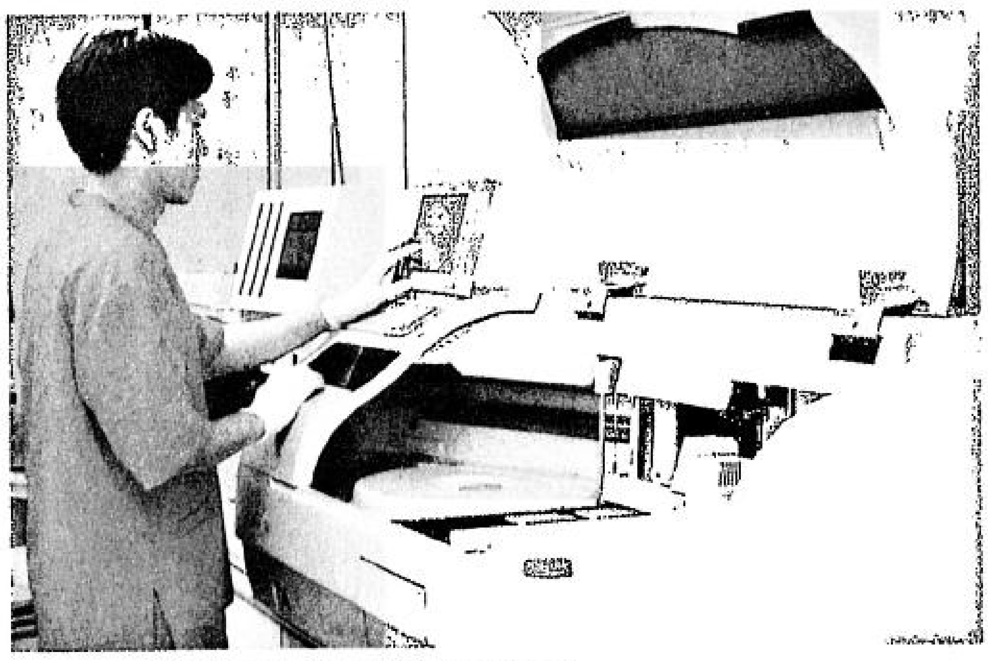
At Ysa Skin Care Center, every acne treatment and mild facial peeling will get a complimentary body scrub using Ysa's own concoction for only P2,200.

Besides the body scrub package, there are 10 other equally revitalizing options. Ranging from P950 up to P35,000, Ysa's services include warts removal (face or whole body), body peeling, bleaching, body scrub, massage and lipo dissolve or mesotherapy.

Ysa Skin Care Center's summer package is available until April 30. Call 9120703.

Work your way to a healthy and fit body at Fitness Advantage for only P2,800. The gym has teamed up with Red Corner, a fitness and boxing club. Save P800 in monthly fees when you enroll in both gyms that offer personalized service and workout programs.

Group exercise sessions, including yoga and Pilates, are also available, with some classes conducted by fitness expert Tina Juan. Call 7710199.



HALF-PRICE FOR MAMMOGRAM TESTS

Healthway Medical Clinics is giving a 50-percent discount on mammogram tests in its clinics in SM City North Edsa, Shangri-La Plaza Mall and Robinsons Place Manila until April 30 in observance of Women's Month in March. Mammogram tests aid doctors in the early detection of breast cancer. Dr. Norge Tan, Healthway's health promotion and quality assurance manager, said women aged 40 to 49 should have a mammography every one to two years. Some physicians even recommend a mammogram as early as 35 if a woman's family has a history of breast cancer.

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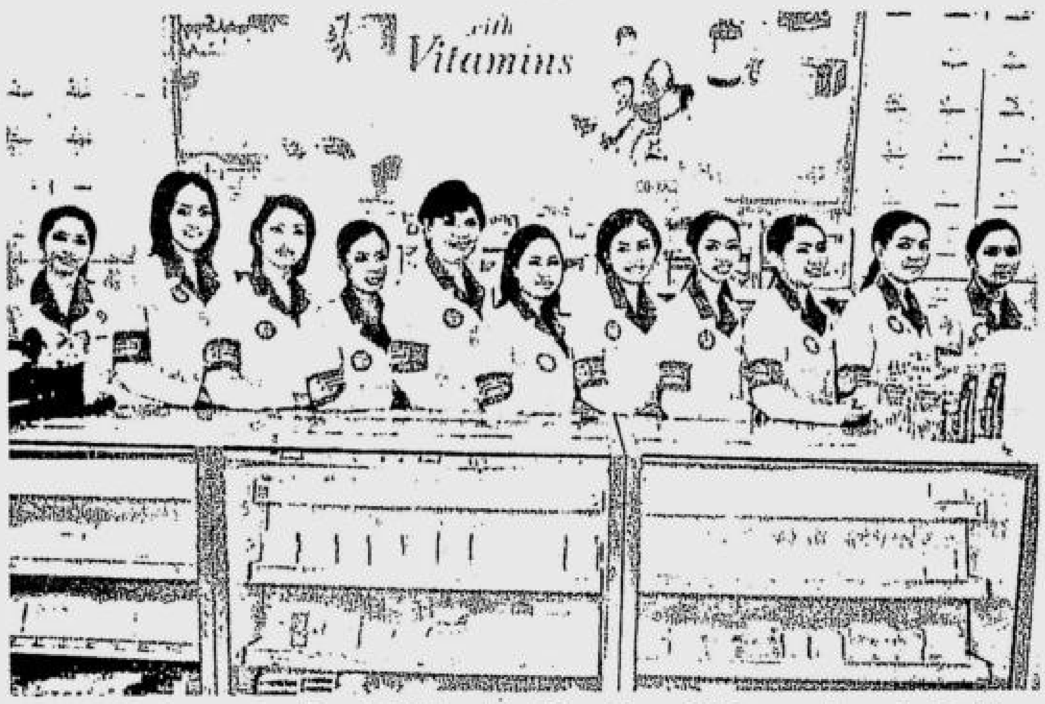
Cleansing body and soul /D4

LIFESTYLE



WATSONS' pharmacists: (from left) Mary Anne Veron Cruz, Phil Enorme, Jaymelyn David, Mhylene Sager, Marla Cunanan, Evelyn Masbate, Janice Ann Haw, Katherine de Villa, Charo Ganias, Jacqueline Isip and Jocelyn Garganta

The health care authority is back

Trained pharmacists can now be found in every Watsons branch to dispense free health information and advice to customers

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Rudy Esperas

FOR MANY Filipinos, the prospect of a visit to the doctor's office is less than appealing. The old saying "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is how some of us view our health.

"It's a sad reality that most Filipinos do not consider health care as one of their priorities," says Grace Rivera, merchandise director of Watsons. "They only seek medical attention when the situation gets worse or when the pain becomes unbearable."

So, to raise awareness about health issues and educate consumers through professional health information and advice, Watsons Phils. has introduced Pharmacy Self Care (PSC).

PSC is a community health education initiative developed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. It has been running for 15 years now. Watsons adapted recently the program in Hong Kong in collaboration with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, School of Pharmacy and associated professional health and patient organizations.

Watsons Phils. is the latest to implement the program, with the support of pharmaceutical companies and various health organizations. It also aims to support the health promotion program of the Department of Health.

Frontliners in health care

Pharmacists can play a crucial role in closing that knowledge gap and getting Filipinos back into the health care network. They can help people by identifying risks to their health and actively pushing them to get a physical examination.

"Often, when people don't feel well, they self-prescribe and rely on advertising for advice," says Rivera. "Watsons intends to restore the role of pharmacists as one of the frontliners in community health care."

Professionally trained pharmacists can now be found in every Watsons pharmacy to provide customers with free health information leaflets, healthy lifestyle checks and handy advice on the proper use of medication. Whether customers buy something from Watsons or not, they can freely approach the pharmacists to seek advice.

Every two months, Watsons will introduce new health activities. To kick off the program, "Live Healthier Lives: Energize with Vitamins" was launched recently. It's a campaign that encourages consumers to improve their health and build their body's resistance against diseases through the right supplements.

Watsons teamed up with United Laboratories for this program, which will run for eight weeks. Along with free info leaflets, customers will be given discounts on vitamins for two months.

...cy self care

GRACE Rivera, merchandise director of Watsons; Zanaida Ludovice, assistant health secretary; Dean Eladio Tinio, president, Philippine Pharmaceutical Association; Nigel Healey, managing director, Watsons Phils.

Medicine dispensary

Watsons started as a medicine dispensary. Its beginnings can be traced back to as early as 1828 when it first opened in the southern province of Guangzhou, China, as Canton Dispensary.

Back then, pharmacists were at the helm of health care. People related symptoms of their ailments and pharmacists gave advice and prescribed pills to cure their illnesses.

Over the years, Watsons has evolved into more than a drug dispensary. It's now a one-stop shop that offers a diverse range of affordable products. But with the launch of PSC, Watsons is going back to its roots as a health care authority.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

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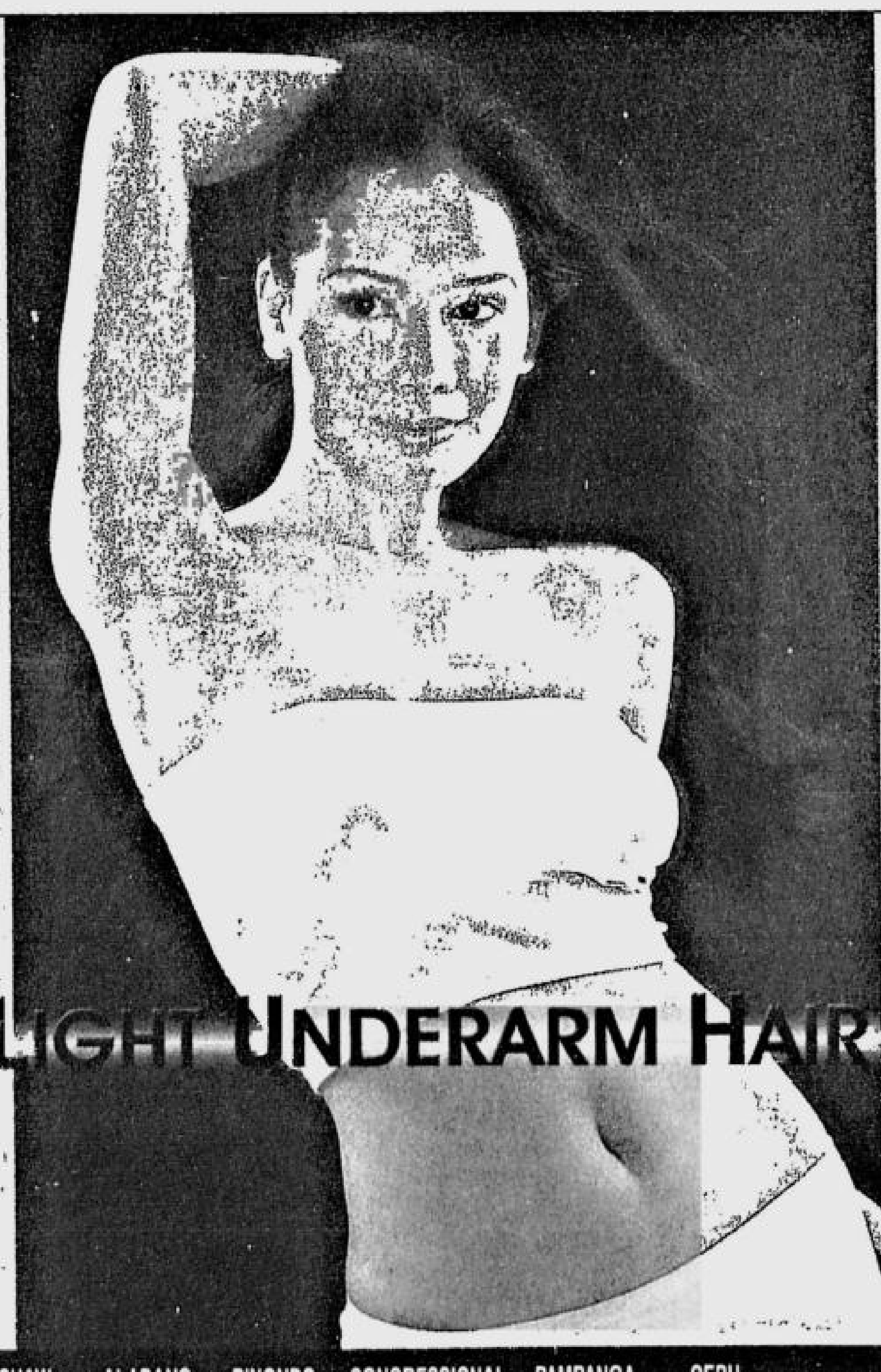

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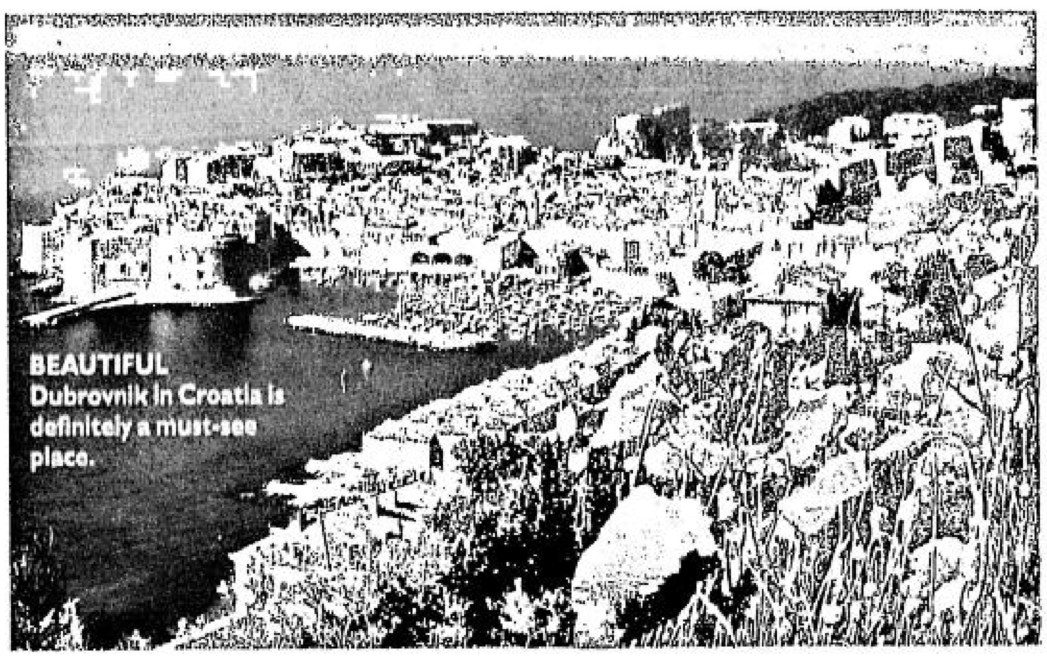
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WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

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Alex Van Hagen
on Kodak Max

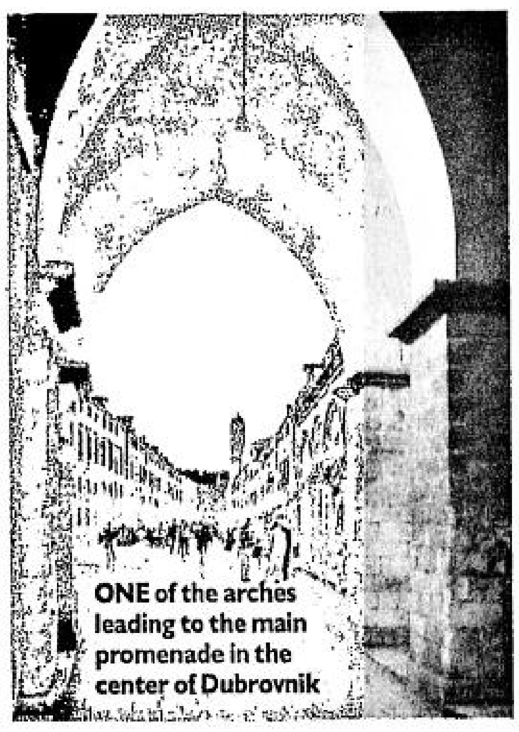
WE took the popular Qatar Airways' *tres chic* business class section to Milan recently, via the fantastic Doha, Qatar. Qatar Airways is one of the fastest-growing airlines today, flying to almost 50 destinations in Europe, Africa, Indian subcontinent, Asia and Middle East. It inaugurated recently thrice weekly flights between Doha and Mactan, Cebu, via Singapore!

With one of the youngest fleets, aahhh, how wonderful it was to be on board the magnificent Middle Eastern airlines' business class. Take note, *palanggas*, it is the first to offer Sogerma Sleeper Seats, which reclines 160 degrees and has an independent lumbar support and even a massage bar.

Each business class seat has a personal 10.4-inch wide flat screen television monitor, with 21 video channels. In-flight service was definitely world-class. The crew was multinational, so there were our efficient *kababayans* at your service.

The new, multimillion US dollar terminal of the Doha International Airport, a desert Utopia, was our transit point to Europe. The terminal will be used for only about a year because this oil-rich Gulf state is building a new, wow $2.5 billion airport due to open in 2005.

To get a glimpse of Doha, Qatar's capital, we arranged for a transit hotel for our 16-hour layover. Filipinos at the desk, as well as others we met at the hotel, were most helpful.


ONE of the arches leading to the main promenade in the center of Dubrovnik

ALONG a pristine beach in Qatar, you'll find a historical ruin.

QATAR combines the exotic and modern.

THE SUPER efficient international crew of Qatar Airways on our way to Qatar: Shyamal Shroff of India, Amal Machkor of Morocco and our very own, Brian Autencio

Meeting an old friend

One of them was our friend, super nice **Jayson Lara**, manager of the new Capital Hotel and a Triple-V top man for years. He showed us around the ultra-modern city with its gorgeously designed buildings and humongous malls.

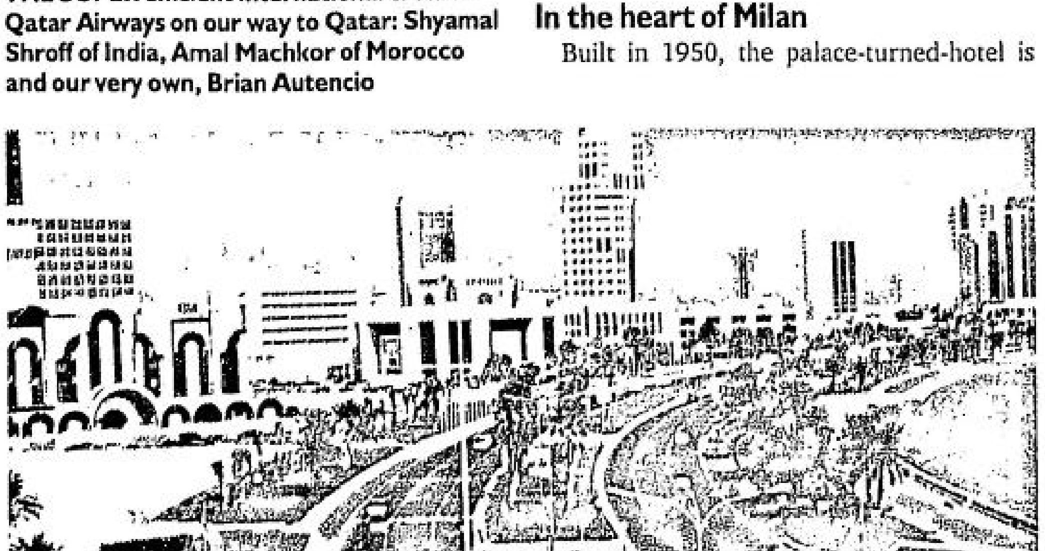
Before midnight, we were sipping our favorite bubbly and ready to snooze on another Qatar Airways Sogerma Sleeper business class seat, on our way to Milan's Malpensa Airport. From the airport, we drove to the stunning chi-chi The Westin Palace Milan, our home in Italy's fashion and passion capital.

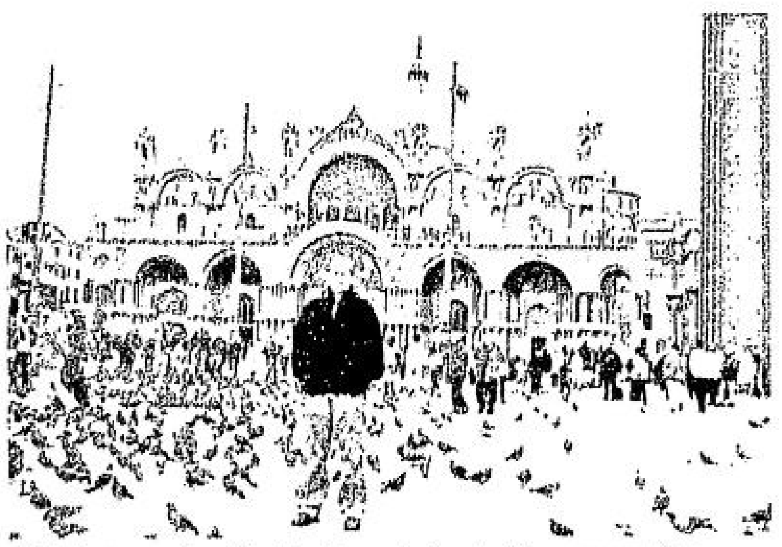
Our stay was arranged by Starwood Hotels and Resorts, through the workaholic shakers and achievers **Lisa Halim** and **Hwee Peng Yeo**, PR heads of the Singapore regional office, together with Starwood's super asset, vibrantly workasonic **Rica Baello-Penalosa**, from its lone Philippine property, The Westin Philippine Plaza. We were graciously hosted by **Ciro Verrocchi** and vivacious **Sara Migliore**, general manager and public relations manager, respectively, of Starwood's beautiful The Westin Palace Milan.

Starwood is the world's largest operator of luxury and deluxe hotels with almost 800 hotels, resorts and inns under six groups: The Luxury Collection, St. Regis Hotels and Resorts, Sheraton Hotels and Resorts, Westin Hotels and Resorts, W Hotels and Four Points by Sheraton.

In the heart of Milan

Built in 1950, the palace-turned-hotel is right in the heart of Milan, next to the Galleria and across the Piazza de la Republica. The Westin Plaza Milan is definitely the place to stay.


PART of the ultra-modern skyline at Qatar's Corniche circle


ACE photographer Alex Van Hagen in front of the camera, for a change, at the Piazza di San Marco in Venice

OUR fab penthouse suite aboard the world-class Crystal Serenity ship

TOP PR lady of the elegant and popular Westin Palace in Milan, vivacious Sara Migliore

CIRO Verrocchi, GM of the Westin Palace in Milan

Westin Hotels and Resorts' latest innovation is the super to-die-for Heavenly Bed. The stylish, all-white Heavenly Bed is custom-designed by Simmons Beautyrest for Westin. Reputed as "the most comfortable in the world," the Heavenly Bed may be experienced in the Philippines only at the top floor of The Westin Philippine Plaza.

You can buy it, *palanggas*, for $2,500, including five of the best pillows available. Call dahling Rica to order one.

We left our elegant rooms to dash to the center of town and drool at the gorgeous show windows of top fashion labels. Several boutiques and department stores used both beautiful live models and mannequins.

After a night in the lap of Westin's luxury, and breakfast at the rooftop's The Terrace, a green oasis of trees and flowers where you get a breathtaking view of the city's famous cathedral, we were off to the Stazione Centrale to catch the Eurostar Italia for Venice, our next stop.

Picking up a pilgrim

The Eurostar Italia stopped at Padova, where we met our pal and travel companion, brilliant writer and world traveler **H.B.** (**"Bimbo"** to his gang) **Gapud**, editor in chief of Expeditions Travel Magazine, who was on his annual pilgrimage to the Cathedral of the San Antonio de Padua, his eighth since he began writing. With the efficiency of our international roaming phones, he was able to book a seat next to ours in the train.

In Venice, we embarked on our 13-day cruise aboard Crystal Cruises' magnificent brand-new MS Crystal Serenity, no less, *palanggas*.

Crystal Cruises is represented in the Philippines by secret weapon and top lady of American Express Adventure International, **Gerry de Guzman**, who invited us on a fab two-week cruise of the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.

Award winners

The MS Crystal Serenity, with its sister ships, MS Crystal Symphony and MS Crystal Harmony, has received top ratings from super prestigious travel organizations, and the company named "the best large ship cruise line."

In spite of its size, *moi* found the MS Crystal Serenity intimate and exclusive. Her grand atrium is just two decks (floors) but grand in every sense. The one-level, two-sitting main dining room exudes understated elegance.

With eight restaurants and 10 bars, plus two private dining rooms, Crystal Cruises' vessels are for those who want all the facilities of larger five- and four-star ships, without compromising six-star services and amenities.

We had two days for sightseeing and shopping, *naturellement*, of postcard-pretty Venice. As the saying goes, if you sit at Venice's main piazza for an hour or two, you will bump into someone you know.

After sipping cappuccino and espressos at the Piazza San Marco, *palanggas*, we did see a familiar face, our friend **Marco Roberto Ascione**, "king of Murano artwork." Business magnate **Manolo** and **Maritess Lopez; Joe** and **Tina Guingona,** with **Jojo** and **Monina Villaluz**, stopped over while on a cruise on another line.

After sailing down the Adriatic Sea, we dropped anchor off the coast of the stunning capital of Croatia, Dubrovnik.

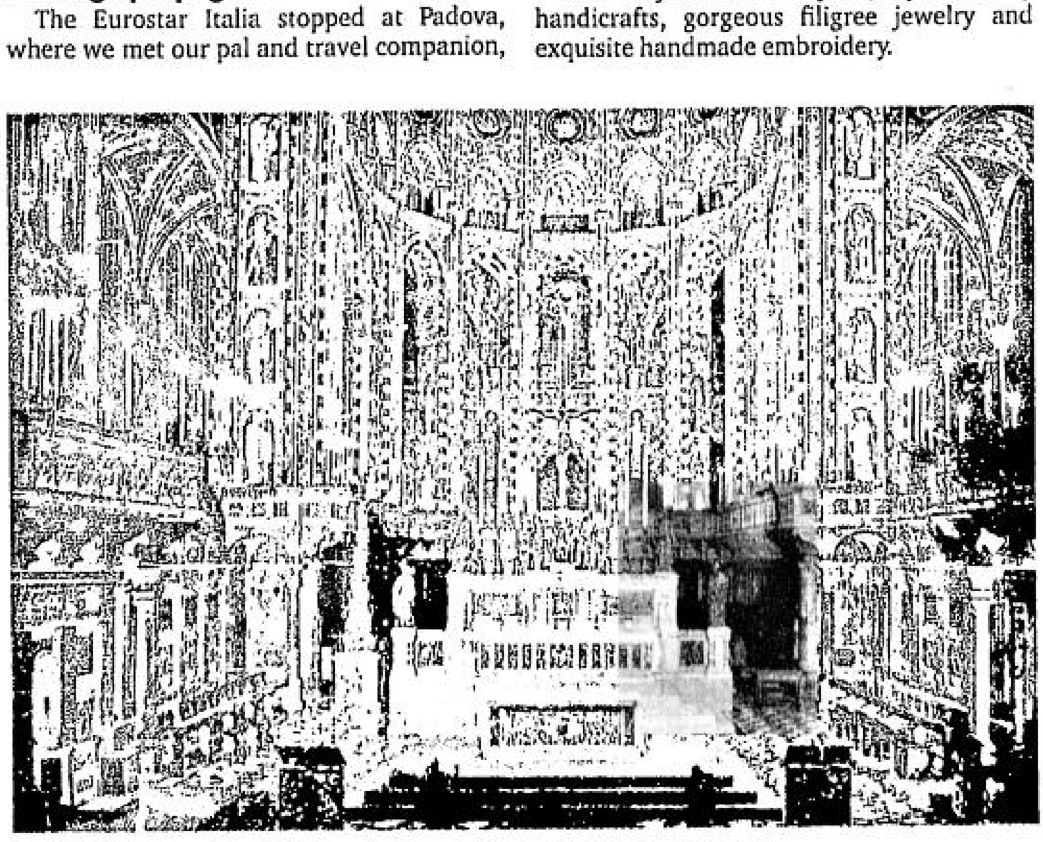
Not many places will elevate you from being a casual tourist to a seasoned traveler. Dubrovnik, "one of the greatest outdoor museums in Europe," is one of those places.

Included in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the gorgeous walled city of Dubrovnik is on the shores of the Adriatic Sea along Croatia's Dalmatian coast.

Yes, *palanggas*, this is where the Dalmatian dog originated.

We sat down in an open café in the middle of the old town's shopping area, watching the most gorgeous women and super handsome men.

Best buys include crystal, eye-catching handicrafts, gorgeous filigree jewelry and exquisite handmade embroidery.


THE HIGH altar of the fabulous Basilica of St. Anthony in Padova, Italy

Time to test 'anting anting'

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

HOLY Week means different things to people. To a devout Christian, it is the time of repentance and mortification of the body. To healers, it is the time to gather herbal medicine in the mountains to ensure its potency. But to those who believe in amulets or talismans, it is the time to test their powers and renew their energy.

"*Anting anting*" or amulets are objects or secret words believed to protect wearers against bullets, snake bites and knives. Other amulets are supposed to make one invisible or impervious to pain. Still others are supposed to attract the opposite sex or bring back a lost love.

Many Filipinos, including military and police officers, believe in the *anting anting*. This Good Friday, amulet aficionados will gather in secret places in Rizal, Mt. Banahaw, Batangas, San Pablo, Pasig and elsewhere to test their *anting anting*.

I have never really believed in *anting anting* and *oracion* because I have not personally seen them work. Most stories of their powers came from secondary sources. Neither have I come across any documentary evidence of their powers.

In 1983, I witnessed the testing of amulets in Binangonan, Rizal. They were all hit by bullets. The occasion was a television production of "Talisman's Magic," which I co-hosted. It was produced and directed by Maria V. Montelibano. She requested young Tac Padilla, then an 18-year-old rapid fire and standard postal champion shooter, to fire at the amulets.

To ensure no one would be hurt, the amulets were carefully positioned on a sandbag under a big tree. Padilla was to shoot amulets offered for testing by their owners.

Beginner's amulets

This was how I described that incident in my book, "True Encounters with the Unknown":

"Three amulets, consisting of carefully folded pieces of paper containing secret Latin words, were taped in front of a sandbag leaning under a coconut tree. At a distance of five meters, Tac Padilla sized up the target, took a deep breath, carefully aimed his pistol and pulled the trigger in succession. Three shots rang out, each bullet finding its target and leaving a gaping hole on each amulet.

"The reaction of the amulet owners was one of surprise. Immediately, they went inside the house and conferred with one another. Some started praying before their amulets to recharge them.

"Another set of amulets, owned by different owners, were posted on the sandbag. The crowd of onlookers began to thicken. And the director and TV crew had a hard time controlling them. As Tac Padilla prepared for the next series of shots and the TV camera started whirring, the director shouted for everybody to keep quiet. Another series of shots rang out, all of which hit the amulets on the center."

By that time, the attention of the crowd shifted from the amulets to the remarkable young sharpshooter. Padilla was himself wondering what was so special about those pieces of folded paper. "How can I not hit them when they are nothing but paper?" he told me.

I explained that the people there believed that the pieces of paper contained power words that were supposed to deflect bullets or, at least, protect wearers from harm. The secret words and symbols were imprinted on white handkerchiefs which became the amulets.

Old-timers' amulets

My story continues: "After lunch there was more excitement as old-timers began betting their long-kept amulets against the colt of Tac Padilla. The crowd fell silent when a man approached the sandbag and placed his dignum wood amulet on it. The wood was only slightly bigger than an ordinary button. Among amulet aficionados, dignum wood is believed to be found only in the mystical Mt. Banahaw and is considered one of the most powerful amulets, because according to Mt. Banahaw legends, dignum was the wood on which Jesus Christ was crucified.

"Unaware of the significance of the next amulet he was supposed to shoot, Tac Padilla aimed his deadly pistol, pulled the trigger and blew the dignum to pieces. The crowd clapped enthusiastically as the amulet owner stared at his splintered dignum in disbelief.

"Four more amulets (pieces of paper) were placed simultaneously on the target. Tac Padilla missed the first amulet but hit all the rest point blank. He said he missed the first target because that was the first shot. He was convinced he could hit the next set, which he did."

For me, the whole event was an impressive display of Tac Padilla's marksmanship, but a definite disappointment as far as the reported powers of amulets and talismans are concerned.

Next week I will tell you of a remarkable and incredible incident I witnessed and experienced in Lumang Lipa, Batangas, that altered my view of the power of *anting anting* to blunt sharp blades and protect one from bolos.

Listen to my program Inner Mind on Radio every Sunday 7-8:30 p.m. over station dzMM.

The shoe that fits

AN ATHLETE'S performance relies heavily on the shoe.

With the foot absorbing a lot of the pressure in any athletic activity, many injuries result from ill-fitting shoes.

Converse, the 96-year-old shoe company, has designed a shoe that works like the human foot for optimum performance. It offers the technologically advanced Converse Icon Performance System.

The shoe wraps under, around and next to the foot, completely in sync with the foot's structure and movement. Superior cushion and support allows maximum energy efficiency and responsiveness.

Technological advances are applied throughout the entire foot, from heel to forefoot. Three dynamic systems are especially developed and applied in each shoe: Converse Icon Tunable Ride, Converse Icon FitLok System and Micro-Climate Management.

The Converse Icon Tunable Ride allows the smooth transition from one movement to the other, and from one foot to the next.

Cushioning is maintained at a proper level as well as through independent struts. Cushion, control, shock absorption and stability are what the Tunable Ride technology is all about.

The FitLok system wraps the foot securely so slippage that causes blisters, among others, is minimized. This system also gives full support to the heel and ankle, and both sides of the feet. Feet feel stable and secure, even at the midfoot. A second FitLok supports the heel all the way to the midfoot and forefoot. The highly advanced gripping system provides sturdy fit and responsiveness for overall handling.

Superior breathability for utter comfort during peak level performance is provided by the Converse Micro Climate Management system technology. Shoes are made of highly breathable, micro porous materials that increase moisture wicking and heat dissipation. Air flows freely from foot to toe. Texture insole and collar lining further improves air circulation. Less fatigue, more comfort, better performance.

The Converse Icon Performance System takes care of the feet inside out, from heel to toe, from side to side.

CONVERSE'S textured insole and collar lining improve breathability and enhance the internal feel of the shoe.

SOLE ARMOR. Created through careful scientific study, Converse Weapon enables athletes to perform better.

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FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Are all doctors in an accredited hospital accredited?

No, not all doctors in an accredited hospital are accredited providers. In every affiliated medical facility, MEDICard has a team of doctors (medical service team-MST) to efficiently manage the healthcare of its members. MEDICard ensures that the MST is composed of well-trained doctors and that each field of specialization is well represented.

Meet your MEDICard Team

For pediatric consultations, members may visit **Dr. Maria Teresa A. Reyes**, MEDICard accredited specialist based in Perpetual Help Medical Center in Las Piñas City. Doktora Reyes, a Medicine graduate of Far Eastern University, finished her residency training for her specialization at The Medical City. She is a Diplomate of the Philippine Pediatric Society and a member of the Philippine Medical Association. She is also a Faculty member of the JONELTA school of Medicine at the University of Perpetual Help. Visit Dr. Reyes' clinic for your consultation needs, Room 313 every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 AM to 12 noon and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 6 in the evening.

Contract Signing

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CORP. (PNCC NON-TOLLWAYS) renewed its MEDICard coverage consummated in a contract signing held recently at the Richmonde Hotel. Seated (L-R) are MEDICard's Luis Montoya (EVP & GM), Luzila Cui (Corp. Accounts Mngr.) and Dr. Nicanor Montoya (Pres.) together with PNCC's Pastor Ramos Jr. (Acting Pres. & CEO), Janice Day Alejandrino (Head, HR & Admin. Div.) and Atty. Glenna Jean Ogan (Head, Legal Div.). Standing (L-R) are MEDICard's Voltaire Victoria (Mktg & Sales Mngr.) and Bonnette Cui (Accounts Mngr.) with the construction company's Alma Sagun (HRAD Staff), Rosabella Vasallon (Exec. Sec.) Vida Amor Sison (Head, Personnel Dept.) and Atty. Melvin Gonzales (Head, Contracts Review & Formulation)

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 818-2161. For group or corporate membership, dial 812-8360, 817-5136 or 817-4985 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 253-5031.

TEXT MEDICARD: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4627 (Smart & Talk N' Text).
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asia Pacific Region to be ISO CERTIFIED

Two fitness workshops

A FREE Tai Chi seminar will be held April 17. Tentative venue is the Rockwell Center. The seminar ushers in the 7th World Tai Chi and Qigong Day on April 24.

A celebration follows on April 25, 5-8 p.m., at the Quezon Memorial Circle.

Summer Tai Chi classes will be conducted starting April 12 at the Dojo Dragon near SM Fairview, QC.

Courses offered are the Simplified 24-step Yang Style, 42-step International Competition Routine, Baguazhang (the origin of Aikido) and Hsingyichuan.

Each course will have 12 sessions of one and a half hours each.

Fee is P2,500 per person. There will be two morning sessions (8 and 10 a.m.) and two afternoon sessions (2 and 4 p.m.).

Call 2725243 or (0921) 5296820.

Meanwhile, yoga teacher Lucia "Ciay" Misa will conduct a workshop April 24-25 at the Good Shepherd Retreat Center, Mary Ridge Hill, Tagaytay City.

Soft-belly yoga emphasizes that the source of movement is not muscle power but the inner energy that flows in the body's spaces when tension is released through one's breath.

Call 4345381 or (0918) 7822805.

Less is more in dieting

MANY experts say less carbohydrates—low-carb diet—will help keep the weight at the desired level.

The low-carb regimen involves reducing the carbohydrate intake to less than 40 g daily. This is enough to automatically break down fat in the body instead of glucose for energy that eventually leads to weight loss. While low calorie deprives one of enjoying good food without really losing weight (just water and muscle), low-carb allows one to consume unlimited meats, fats, cheeses, non-starchy vegetables and fruits like strawberries and blueberries without tipping the scale higher than it should be.

Low carb even sent ripples of change in the lifestyle of serious dieters and even non-dieters. Today, many are inclined to go low carb not only to lose weight but also to keep healthy, especially so that research found low carb reduces heart risks since it eliminates build-up of bad cholesterol in the body.

Believe it or not, even beer drinkers get their time of day with low carb. Low carb promotes indulgence without the guilt because it offers fewer carbohydrates not found in regular beer. What usually contains about 11 grams of carbohydrates and 145 calories is now carefully processed to lessen carbohydrates. This means a quick round of drinks is unlikely to cause one to pack on pounds.

It also dispels the long time perception that the well-loved beer is a burden of the belly.

Drinking low-carb beer is unlikely to give one a beer belly but rather keeps it off. Just the same, going on low carb does not mean throwing away a nice cold bottle of beer. Yes, you can go low on carb while enjoying your favorite brew.

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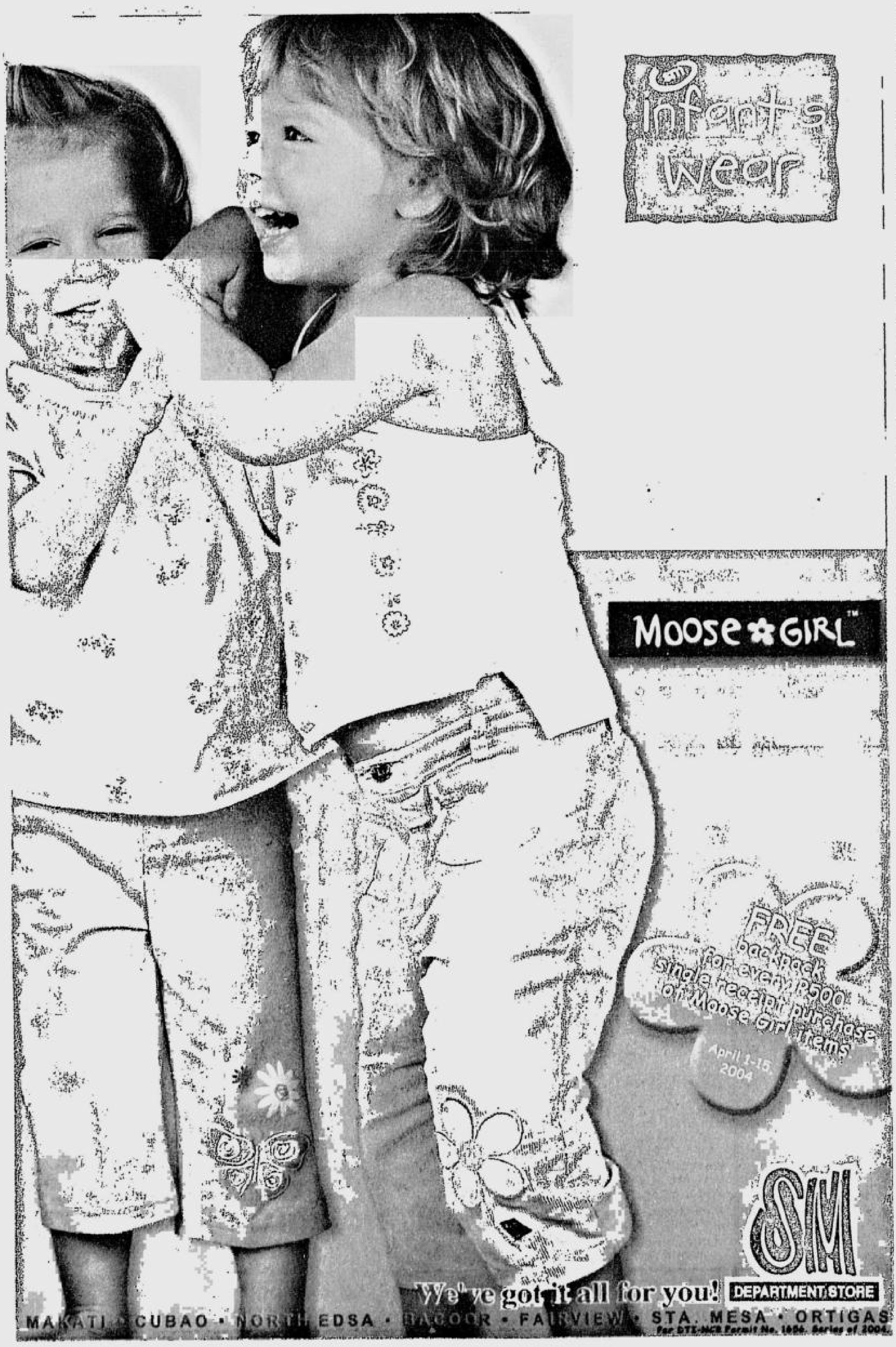
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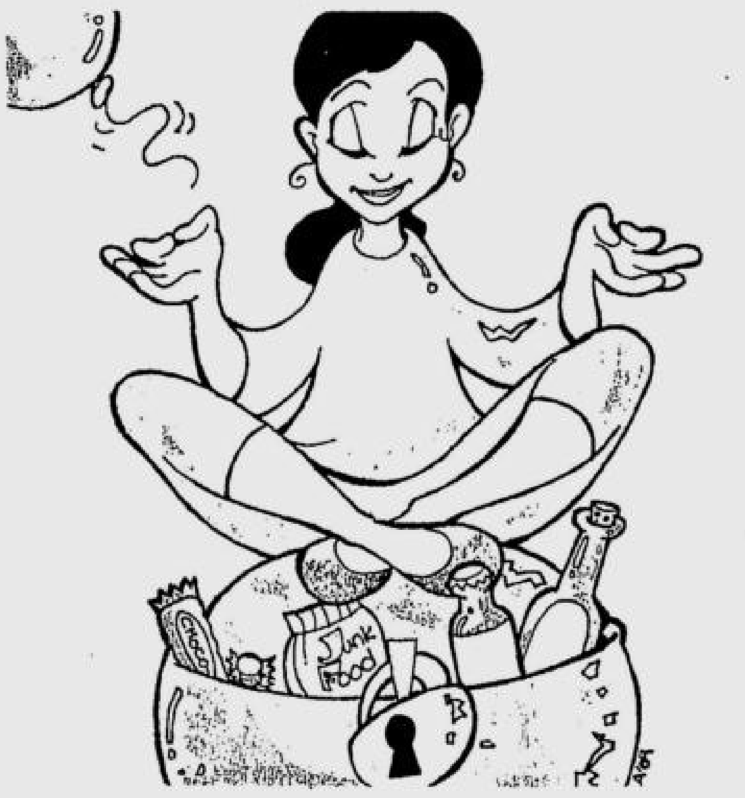
ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

Cleansing body and soul

"...*Every day is an answered prayer.*"—Anonymous

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Here's a seven-day light program that will address the excesses of your pleasures, addictions and cravings

THERE is a time in everyone's life when signals to one's consciousness are communicated by the body and the heart. During those moments, it is wise to stop what you are doing, look at yourself and listen to the inner signals: Fatigue in body and soul.

Over the limit

Living in a stressful world has its price. If you have neglected your physical, emotional and mental health, then maybe it is time to pay more attention to yourself.

Here's a seven-day light program that will address the excesses of your pleasures, addictions and cravings such as sugar, fat, salt, alcohol, caffeine and toxic thoughts and feelings.

For one week:

Stop drinking coffee or teas (like black and green) that are high in caffeine. Replace them with fresh fruit or vegetable juices like carrot/apple, beet/carrot, pineapple, watermelon or light herbal teas like peppermint, chamomile or lemon juice tea.

For breakfast, try having something light and filling but without oil such as fresh fruit and oatmeal/cereal. Accompany with nonfat milk or unsweetened fruit juice (if canned).

Drink 10 glasses of alkaline/ionized water a day (one glass every 45 minutes on a hot summer's day).

Drink nothing alcoholic for seven days.

Skip dessert (anything sweet and creamy) unless it's fresh fruit (not canned and steeped in syrup).

Substitute white rice for red or brown.

Have a fresh green salad with your lunch and dinner. Use a non-creamy dressing (like balsamic vinegar and olive oil or just plain lemon juice and herbs—basil, rosemary, pepper).

Avoid red meat and chicken for one week. Stick to fresh fish, canned or dried fish (make sure it's not salty). Better yet, you can go vegetarian. Add tofu/soy to your diet.

Walk daily for 30 minutes before 7 a.m. or after 5 p.m.

Snack on fresh/naturally dried (no preservatives) fruits (apple, banana, grapes, star apple, pineapple, etc.).

Avoid crackers, bread and pasta between meals.

Instead of substitute butter, get low-fat (50-70 percent less fat) butter (note: some margarines use hydrogenated oils, which some studies have linked to cancer).

Give away all the candy bars, chocolate and pastries in your fridge. Take no-fat, no-sugar ice cream or chilled jello/*gulaman*, if you need something cool for dessert.

You may also abstain from dairy products—cheese, milk, ice cream. You might find some of your allergies disappearing. Have a daily calming detox bath. Add five drops lavender essential oil and two cups salt to a tub of warm water. Soak for seven minutes.

For a super detox bath, use Epson salt (available in any health food store). It is rich in magnesium and will absorb all your toxins, improve circulation and soothe an aching body. Best at bed time to relax you.

Imagine a cloud of light covering and nurturing you. Keep still for five minutes. Focus on your breathing, slow and deliberate.

Read an inspirational book—anything that will quiet your restless mind and calm your spirit.

Each morning, jump out of bed with enthusiasm instead of reluctantly sliding out. Raise your arms toward heaven and declare "I am blessed."

De-stress at night before retiring. Walk in a circle. After making one full circle, step into the middle. Sit on the floor. Do your meditation by focusing on a cloud in your mind's eye. The colors you choose could be the energy you seek (green/pink=love; yellow/gold=courage; red=energy/passion; orange=wisdom; white/blue=healing; indigo=divinity).

Extend your prayer and meditation time to 30 minutes upon waking and before retiring.

Practice patience and nonviolence each day. Try not to lose your temper. Stop swearing.

If you are about to lose emotional control, try this visualization: You are holding a big red balloon with your left hand and on the right a pin. You can release the balloon (symbolic of letting go of your anger) and let it fly, or you can burst it (allowing yourself to explode).

Let the balloon fly. Drop the pin and you will find your temper leaving you, too.

Fast for 24 hours beginning at breakfast. Take apple juice every hour and mineral water every 30 minutes. Break your fast at night with a light soup.

Practice forgiveness. If a person has wronged you, accept his/her apology. If you have wronged someone, ask for forgiveness. If facing the person is too much of an effort for you, praying for the person is just as good.

Do a good deed each day. They can be little things like giving up your seat on the bus for an elderly, visiting an orphanage, handing out sandwiches to street children, etc.

Invoke a miracle. Believe that heaven has heard your prayer and a miracle is coming your way. Affirm: "Today is a miracle day."

Watermelon cooler:

2 boat slices of watermelon
1 tsp grated ginger
2 tsp honey
1 bottle ginger ale

Blend first three items together. Strain. Add chilled ginger ale.

Drink up and be well!

Love and light!